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The Hollywood Reporter

AFM DAILY №2 NOVEMBER 6, 2014

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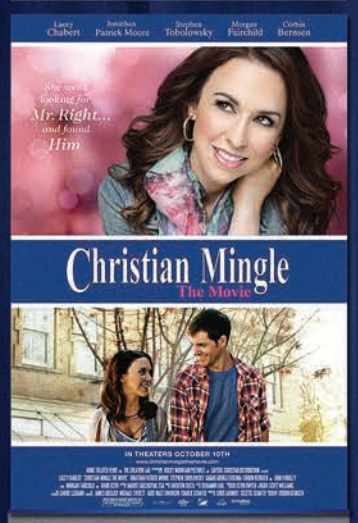
FAIRMONT 1
Nov. 5th @ 1:00 P.M.
FAIRMONT 1
Nov. 7th @ 1:00 P.M.

FAIRMONT 1
Nov. 8th @ 1:00 P.M.

OCEAN SCREENING
Nov. 7th @ 1:00 P.M.



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NOVEMBER 06, 2013
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The Hollywood Reporter

SANTA MONICA WEATHER AND HIGH TEMPS

TODAY 82° F 28° C | TOMORROW 82° F 28° C

KEVIN SPACEY VOTES YES ON *ELVIS & NIXON*

By Scott Roxborough

Kevin Spacey has signed on to play **Richard Nixon** opposite **Michael Shannon**'s **Elvis Presley** in **Liza Johnson**'s *Elvis & Nixon*, a drama about the pair's remarkable meeting at the White House on Dec. 21, 1970.

Prescience is financing *Elvis & Nixon*, and Bloom is introducing the project to foreign buyers at AFM.

Spacey

Johnson will direct from a screenplay co-written by **Cary Elwes** and **Hanala** and **Joey Sagal. Cassian Elwes**, whose credits include *Dallas Buyers Club* and *Lee Daniels' The Butler*, will produce with **Holly Wiersma** (*Bobby, Dallas Buyers Club*). **Byron Wetzel** and Prescience's **Tim Smith** and **Paul Brett** are executive producing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Cooper Signs on as J.D. Salinger

By Scott Roxborough

Oscar-winning actor **Chris Cooper** has signed on to play late author **J.D. Salinger** in *Coming Through the Rye*, a coming-of-age story set in 1969.

Emmy-winning TV director **Jim Sadwith** (*Sinatra*) will helm the movie in his feature film debut.

Alex Wolff (*A Birder's Guide to Everything*) and **Stefania Owen** (*The Carrie Diaries*) star in *Coming Through the Rye* as teenagers who set out to find the notoriously reclusive author.

The film is based on Sadwith's own attempt to track down Salinger and his encounters with the author of *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Cooper, who recently appeared

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

China's Web Giants Flex Their Muscle

A week after Alibaba's Jack Ma scoured Hollywood for content, deep-pocketed Chinese Internet outlets — and their newly minted film divisions — are out in force at AFM *By Clifford Coonan and Rebecca Sun*

Two years ago they were names known only to geeks in China, but now they are serious players at the American Film Market as China's online giants establish themselves in their disruptive new roles as the studios of the future.

At the U.S.-China Film Summit in the Millennium Biltmore hotel, organized by the Asia Society, the big stars of the day were the representatives of China's online companies.

BAT — Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent — are the three internet giants making major inroads into the entertainment industry and setting themselves up as content buyers and producers.

Alibaba CEO **Jack Ma**, flush with cash from his company's recent IPO, was in Los Angeles last week meeting with studios and looking for ways to expand his company's film and TV business.

And reps from China's army of online video firms are the flavor of the month in L.A. these days.

Zhu Huilong, CEO of online video company Youku Tudou's freshly minted film unit Heyi, said it is now possible for content providers to make money from online video.

"Internet advertising revenues have jumped in the last four to five years, and licensing fees are also increasing," said Zhu.

Asked at what point Chinese online companies wanted to see projects, either at the development stage or when they were close to completion, Zhu said the time is now: "We would want to be involved early on, before shooting begins."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The Man Who Knew Infinity

Jeremy Irons (left) and Dev Patel star as British mathematician G.H. Hardy and self-taught Indian math genius Srinivasa Ramanujan, respectively, in Matt Brown's *The Man Who Knew Infinity*. The film traces the relationship between the men after Hardy brought Ramanujan from his home in India to work at Trinity College, Cambridge. It was the first film to ever shoot on location at the college. The project, which Mister Smith Entertainment is pitching to international buyers at AFM, comes at a time when period dramas about brainy Brits are in fashion: think Benedict Cumberbatch as code-breaker Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game* and Eddie Redmayne as physicist Stephen Hawking in *The Theory of Everything*.

THR HEAT INDEX

NIELS SWINKELS
Universal Pictures International's U.K. boss got a career bump, getting promoted to executive vp distribution at the company's international distribution arm.

ROBERT PATTINSON
Following the tepid box office of *The Rover*, Pattinson got more bad news this week when financing and production company Benaroya Pictures pulled out of *Idol's Eye*, starring Pattinson opposite Robert De Niro.

KNOW YOUR DEALMAKER

GREG SILVERMAN
president of creative development and worldwide production
The Warner Bros. exec has long wanted to work with Working Title. Now, Silverman's gotten his way, sealing a deal for domestic rights to Max Joseph's directorial debut, *We Are Your Friends*, starring Zac Efron.

MEANWHILE, IN THE REAL WORLD ...

► **Matt Damon** has joined Alexander Payne's satire *Downsizing*, about a man who decides he can have a better life if he undergoes a process to shrink himself.

► Focus Features has come on board to develop the YA adaptation of *The Scorpio Races*, based on **Maggie Stiefvater**'s popular book.

► RLJ Entertainment, created by BET founder **Robert L. Johnson**, is launching the Urban Movie Channel. The company's proprietary digital channel will feature urban-themed movies as an alternative to conventional subscription-based channels.

Spacey

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Elvis & Nixon recounts the well-documented moment when the King of Rock 'n' Roll showed up on the White House lawn to request that the President swear him in as an at-large undercover federal agent.

"It's almost hard to fathom this story that evolved in the Oval Office between these two extraordinary men," said Bloom principal **Alex Walton**. "It's almost too good to be true."

Added Elwes: "After the enormous success of *The Butler*, I have a deep affection for films set in the White House, as does the public. To work with Shannon and Spacey on this movie at the height of their careers is a dream come true."

Shannon is represented by CAA, Wetzel Entertainment and Morris, Yorn, Levine, Krintzman, Rubenstein, Kohner & Gellman. Spacey is represented by CAA and Joanne Horowitz Management. THR

Cooper

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as Norman Osborn in this year's *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, won his best supporting actor Oscar in 2002 for **Spike Jonze**'s *Adaptation*. The versatile actor also has appeared in such films as *August: Osage County*, *The Bourne Identity* and *American Beauty*.

Cooper

Sadwith also is producing the film with **Stan Erdreich** and **Teddy Grennan**.

Angel Grace Productions is handling international sales and will give buyers at AFM a first peek at the project before its official sales launch at Berlin's European Film Market in February.

Cooper is represented by Untitled Entertainment and **Kevin Yorn**, Wolff by CAA and Untitled Entertainment and Owen by Paradigm and McKeon-Myones Management. THR

China Internet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Revenues from China's online film market are forecast to match theatrical box office within the next five years, and Big Data from China aims to get Hollywood's help to reach this, either through cooperation or acquisition.

iQIYI is a Netflix-like site owned by the massive search engine Baidu, which recently unveiled plans to make seven local films and one Hollywood film next year.

"The industry is changing. Movie people were scared this would damage their industry, but I think this helps," said iQIYI senior vp **Yang Xianghua** during a panel discussion at the Biltmore. "In China if you want to watch a movie, just turn on your phone. Around 60 percent of people are watching on their phones. Especially in second- and third-tier cities, the smartphone is king."

Yang added that iQIYI wants to be the video platform that brings the world to China through its global content and wants to bring China to the world through participating in global movie festivals. "iQIYI will be looking to buy content for Chinese audiences at AFM as well, because we think they have significant appetite for western content," he said.

Nevertheless, concerns remain for Hollywood, specifically China's quota system and censorship.

But Bona chief **Yu Dong**, who is remaking *Bride Wars* with Fox, said the quota system of 34 overseas movies each year is doomed because the Internet offers a vast outlet for content. "The quota will be increased. When it comes to the Internet in China, anything goes," he said.

As for censorship, **Ted Sarandos**, chief content officer at Netflix, said both *House of Cards* and even *Orange Is the New Black* were showing (and were popular) in China. However, he added new rules on censorship in China, where regulators want to see foreign TV shows in advance before granting them permits, could make the market more difficult. But he ultimately sees the will of China's 600 million Internet users winning out.

Said Sarandos: "China is a very complicated model. It's a large one and one that I think at the end of the day, human desires win." THR

Sarandon, Janney Circle Whatever

By Pamela McClintock

Susan Sarandon, **Stephen Amell** and **Allison Janney** are in talks to star in the comedy *Whatever Makes You Happy*, based on the popular 2008 novel by **William Sutcliffe** about three longtime friends who visit their absent sons in New York City.

Mandalay Pictures developed the comedy, which marks the feature directorial debut of TV writer-producer **Cindy Chupack** (*Modern Family*, *Sex and the City*).

Radiant Film International is introducing the project to foreign buyers at AFM.

Sutcliffe's novel tells the story of three suburban mothers who have been friends since their now 28-year-old-sons were in grade school. Now, the boys all live in New York, never call their mothers and seem to have no sense of direction or responsibility. Feeling marginalized and forgotten, the women impulsively decide to pay their sons an unannounced visit in the city. THR

MALKOVICH, COLLETTE JOIN *UNLOCKED*

By Rebecca Ford

John Malkovich and **Toni Collette** will join **Noomi Rapace**, **Michael Douglas** and **Orlando Bloom** in the female *Bourne*-style thriller *Unlocked*.

Malkovich

Michael Apted is directing from a screenplay by **Peter O'Brien**. The story centers on a CIA interrogator (Rapace), who unwittingly provides information to terrorists and then must race against the clock to stop a biological warfare attack on London. Principal photography will commence on Nov. 3.

Lorenzo di Bonaventura is producing with **Georgina Townsley** and **Erik Howsam**. **Claudia Bluhuber** also is producing as well as financing through Silver Reel. Bloom first introduced the film to buyers at the Toronto International Film Festival. THR

THE MATCH FACTORY

AMERICAN FILM MARKET 2014

TIGERS BY DANIS TANOVIĆ

FRI 7 NOV / 3:00 PM / AMC 1

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DONOSTIA-ZINEMALDIA FESTIVAL DE SAN SEBASTIÁN

LOVE ISLAND BY JASMILA ŽBANIĆ

SAT 8 NOV / 11:00 AM / AMC 3

Festival del film Locarno Piazza Grande

20. Sarajevo Film Festival OFFICIAL SELECTION

ITSI BITSI BY OLE CHRISTIAN MADSEN

SAT 8 NOV / 9:00 AM / DOUBLETREE 1

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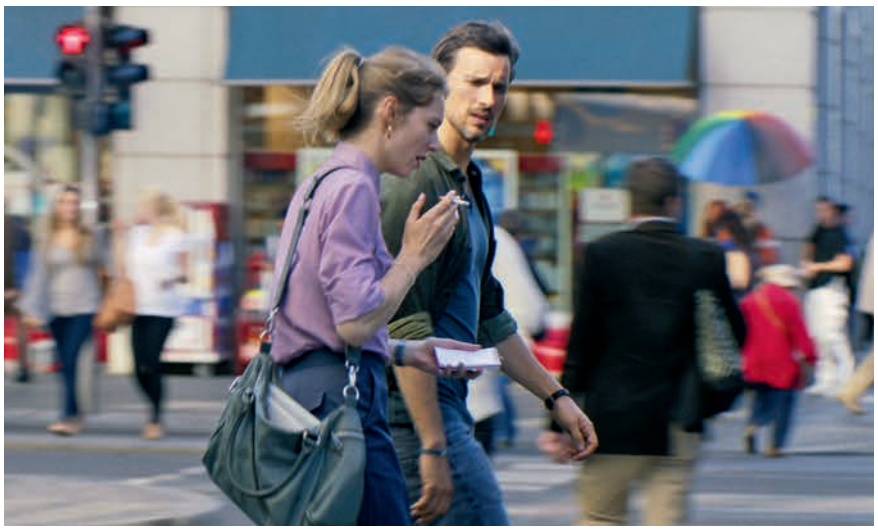

THE LIES OF THE VICTORS BY CHRISTOPH HOCHHÄUSLER

SUN 9 NOV / 5:00 PM / AMC 1

CINEMA FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DEL FILM DI ROMA

PRESENTED AT OUR BOOTH

THE STATE-MAFIA PACT BY SABINA GUZZANTI

MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA La Biennale di Venezia 2014 Venezia 71 – Out of Competition

THE CUT BY FATIH AKIN

MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA La Biennale di Venezia 2014 Venezia 71 – Competition

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AFM *In Brief*

SHOUT! TAKES *MAYA* FOR NORTH AMERICA

Shout! Factory has taken all North American rights to German 3D animated feature *Maya the Bee*, based on Waldemar Bonsels' classic kids book. Shout! said it is planning an all-platform release for the film in 2015. Studio 100 Film, which produced *Maya the Bee* and is handling world sales, has sold the title to multiple markets, including Poland, South Korea and Germany. In the latter, it has grossed about $5.6 million in theaters for distributors Universum Film and Walt Disney Germany.

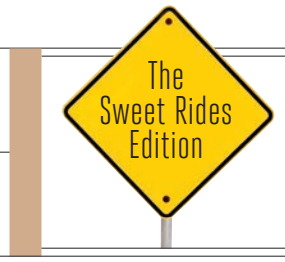
KIER AND BURNS ABOARD *COURIER X*

German veteran actor Udo Kier (*Nymphomaniac*) and *Transformers* co-star James C. Burns have signed on to star in *Courier X*, a conspiracy thriller about the 1996 crash of TWA Flight 800. The accident, which killed all 230 passengers on board, was at the time the second-deadliest airline crash in U.S. history. *Courier X* links the CIA to the crash, with Burns playing an agency field manager in the film. Kier portrays a former member of the East German secret police, the Stasi, who gets solicited by the CIA.

TIBERIUS SNATCHES FOUR TITLES

German distributor Tiberius Film picked up a quartet of new titles as AFM kicked off, nabbing in-production dsytopic thriller *Ares* and the Nicolas Winding Refn-directed documentary *My Life* from Gaumont; The Weinstein Co.'s horror title *Demonic*, directed by James Wan; and Altitude Films' zombie movie *Wyrmwood*. THR

THE 2014 AFM POSTER AWARDS



THR pays tribute to the most amusing and over-the-top promotional materials from the year's market

MOST HONEST LOOK AT AN EPIDEMIC

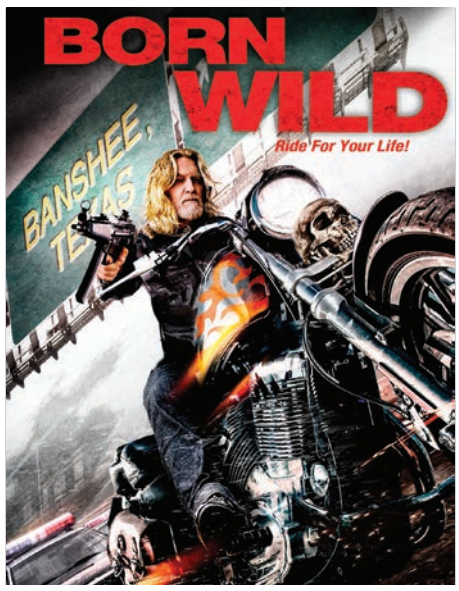
Car Park (Hungary)

Finally someone had the guts to do a hard-hitting documentary that uncovers the depressing reality of what it's like to be a driver in L.A. Yes, we're looking at you, Mr. I-Park-My-BMW-Across-Three-Spaces.

MOST OBVIOUSLY DOOMED RELATIONSHIP

Road to Your Heart (S. Africa)

This is just your average romantic comedy road trip movie, where the woman insists on using a map while the man refuses to ask for directions. The film's upcoming sequel, *Road Out of Your Heart*, will focus on their bitter divorce.



MOST INEFFICIENT USE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Born Wild (USA)

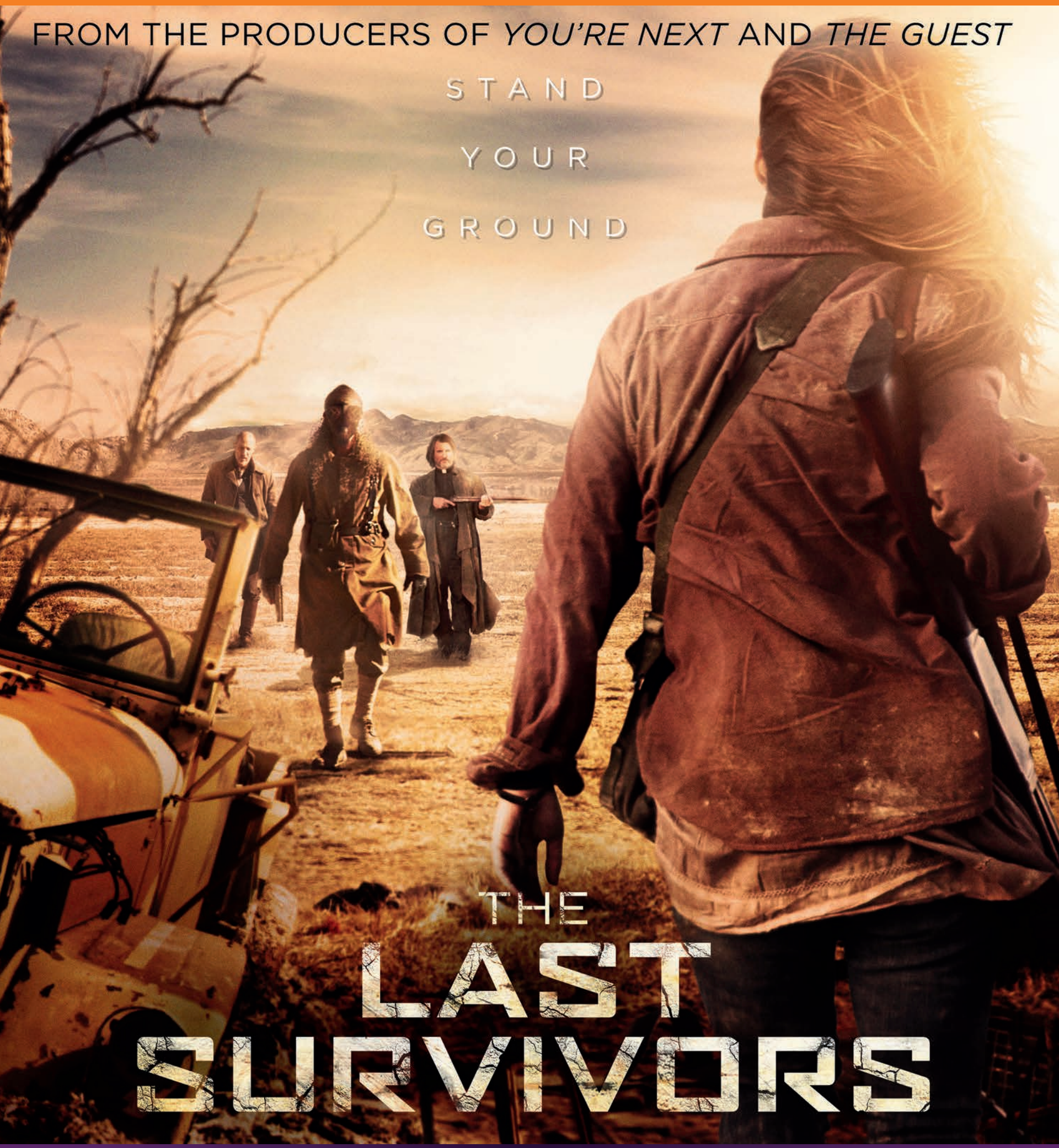
We're sorry, but it has to be said: The placement of the road sign above the biker makes absolutely no sense within the context of the road he's on. You may find other things wrong with this poster, but that one was gnawing at us.

MOST TESTOSTERONE IN ANYTHING EVER

The Black Rider (USA)

What's more badass than hot rods, tanks and F-16s? Hot rods, tanks, and F-16s manned by Brian Bosworth and Kevin Sorbo! Our heads just exploded from testosterone overload.

SCREENING: TODAY | 15.00 | FAIRMONT 4



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NAOMI WATTS JOINS CAST OF *SHUT IN*

By Etan Vlessing

Two time Oscar nominee **Naomi Watts** has signed on to star in the drama *Shut In*.

The psychological thriller from Lava Bear Films is directed by **Farren Blackburn** from the 2012 Black List screenplay by **Christina Hodson**. EuropaCorp will co-produce and finance, and it's being shopped at AFM for international sales.

Watts

Shut In, developed and packaged by Lava Bear, will shoot in Europe in 2015. Watts' recent movie credits include *Birdman* and *St. Vincent*, and Blackburn has directed for such TV series as *Luther* and *Doctor Who*. Hodson also wrote *The Eden Project*, which recently was acquired by Sony.

Lava Bear president **Tory Metzger** oversees the film's production for EuropaCorp and the producer.

Watts, Blackburn and Hodson are represented by CAA. THR

Americans, Chinese Follow Bouncing Ball

By Alex Ben Block

Forty-three years ago, a table-tennis match between U.S. and Chinese players led to a meeting of President **Richard Nixon** and Chinese leader **Mao Zedong**.

What came to be called "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" led to the normalization of U.S.-China relations and is at the heart of a planned $40 million movie titled *Let It Be*.

Producers have acquired life rights to two athletes central to the story — **Zhuang Zedong** of China and **Glenn Cowan** of the U.S. — from their estates. They also have a screenplay by **Richard Friedenberg** (*A River Runs Through It*).

"It's a great buddy story," says producer **Andrew Sugerman**. "It's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* on a certain level. It's the collision of two very different lives." THR

The first *Iron Sky* film grossed about $8 million, but hopes for the sequel are higher.

Iron Sky Faithful Sought to Kick in for Sequel

By Scott Roxborough

The makers of *Iron Sky* have launched a crowd-funding campaign to finance the sequel to the 2012 cult favorite about Nazis on the moon.

The target for the first round of crowd-funding, launched Wednesday on Indiegogo and set to last 45 days, is $500,000. During the next 18 months, the *Iron Sky* team is seeking to raise a total of $10 million from online backers. The remainder of the $15 million budget for *Iron Sky: The Coming Race* will be put together from soft money sources, mainly in Germany and the Nordic territories.

Speaking to *THR* at AFM, *Iron Sky* director **Timo Vuorensola** and producer **Tero Kaukomaa** said that by funding the sequel in this way, they hope to avoid some of the problems that beset the release of the first film.

While the $10 million feature sold well, the staggered release of the movie, which debuted in Finland in March 2012 and hit U.S. screens four months later, meant it was widely pirated. Kaukomaa estimates that while some 10 million people worldwide have seen the original movie, only a fraction of them paid for it. The global gross for *Iron Sky* was about $8 million.

"For the sequel, we want to control it entirely so we can do a global day-and-date release to allow all the fans worldwide to be able to see, and pay for, the movie at the same time," Vuorensola said.

To excite that fan base — not to mention potential distributors at AFM — producers will screen a four-minute promo for *Iron Sky: The Coming Race* at a launch party in Santa Monica tonight. THR

Vertical Takes U.S. Rights to *Playing It Cool*

By Scott Roxborough

Vertical Entertainment has picked up U.S. rights for the romantic comedy *Playing It Cool*, which features *Captain America* star **Chris Evans** and **Michelle Monaghan** (*True Detective*).

The feature debut of director **Justin Reardon** has Evans in the role of ME, a man disillusioned by love, who meets HER (Monaghan) at a charity event and charms her by pretending to be a philanthropist. The pair start up a platonic relationship, but he imagines all sorts of crazy ways he will win her heart.

"We think audiences will appreciate the unique storytelling and the honest intimacy between Chris Evans and Michelle Monaghan, which will challenge moviegoers to redefine the way they see love and happiness," said Vertical co-president **Mitch Budin**.

The film is set to bow in U.S. theaters in first quarter 2015. Voltage Pictures is handling sales at AFM. THR

LOTUS BOARDS *NOVEMBER CRIMINALS*

By Alex Ben Block

Lotus Entertainment is co-financing and co-producing *November Criminals*, which it is presenting to international buyers at AFM for the first time.

Moretz

The movie, starring **Chloe Grace Moretz** and **Catherine Keener,** is directed by **Sacha Gervasi** (*Hitchcock*), with a screenplay by **Steven Knight** from a novel by **Sam Munson**. It's about two youngsters who decide to investigate the murder of their friend in the underbelly of Washington and fall in love in the process.

"This is a beautiful love story between two teenagers set against the backdrop of a murder mystery," said Lotus president **Ara Keshishian**. **Beth O'Neil** is producing with Lotus, and CAA and WME are jointly handling the sale of domestic rights. THR

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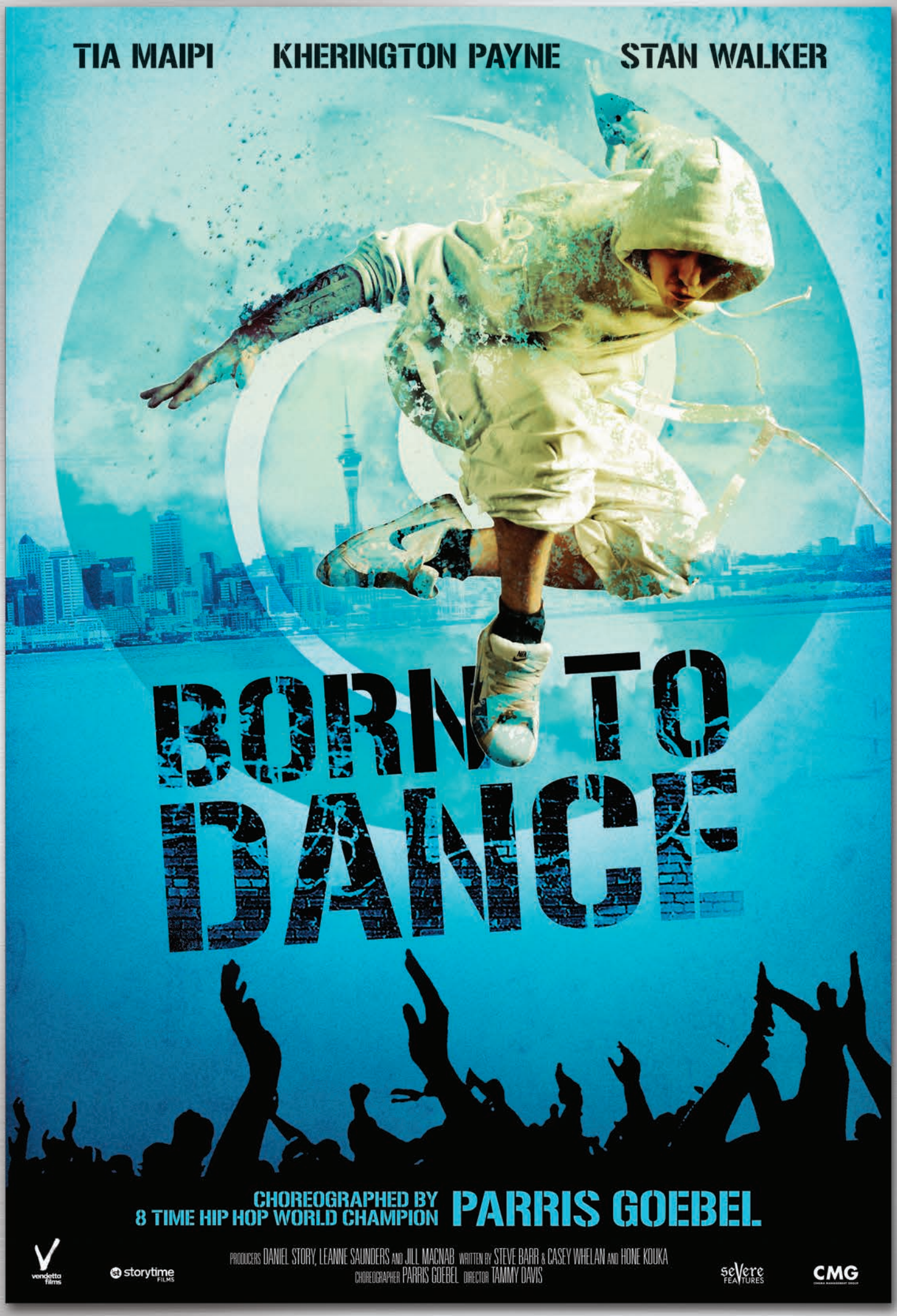

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Ami Canaan Mann

For her new film *Jackie & Ryan*, the oldest daughter of director Michael Mann went train-hopping with a vagabond, who went on to score her movie: 'I wanted all the details to be right' By Scott Roxborough

"You can take the girl out of Indiana but not the Indiana out of the girl," says Mann.

IT CAN BE A TRICKY BUSINESS FOLLOWING in the footsteps of a successful parent, but Ami Canaan Mann, 45, the daughter of Oscar-nominated helmer Michael Mann, has managed to work her way out from under her father's big shadow. The younger Mann made her feature debut with *Morning* in 2001, a small-town drama starring Kieran Mulroney and Annabeth Gish. Her sophomore effort, 2011's *Texas Killing Fields*, starred Sam Worthington, Jessica Chastain, Chloe Grace Moretz and Jeffrey Dean Morgan and premiered, like her latest, *Jackie & Ryan*, at the Venice Film Festival. Katherine Heigl and Ben Barnes star in *Jackie & Ryan* as train-hopping street musicians, and Highland Film Group is selling it to international buyers at the American Film Market. Mann sat down in Venice with *THR* to talk about the country music of her childhood, Heigl's singing voice and riding the rails for research.

Like *Texas Killing Fields*, *Jackie & Ryan* has a rural setting. What is it about the rural landscape that appeals to you?
I think it has something to do with growing up in Indiana. In Los Angeles, I'm in a constant state of culture shock. And I've always been really interested in delving into a place and a people and telling stories of a people who otherwise wouldn't have their stories told — and trying to do it with authenticity and respect. So even though *Texas Killing Fields* and *Jackie & Ryan* are very different films in terms of tone and subject matter, the approach was so similar and familiar to me.

How did you get the idea for the story?
I was invited to speak on a panel at South by Southwest after *Texas Killing Fields*, and as I was walking on the street, I heard this street man playing this music. And the music reminded me of the Fiddler's Gathering, which would happen every summer in my hometown in Indiana. And the story just kind of came to me. After the band stopped playing, I introduced myself to the banjo player [Nick Hans] and said, "I need your email because I'm going to write a story about you." It took a little convincing because he thought I was crazy, but he finally trusted me enough. When I finished the script, I convinced him to take me train-hopping because I wanted to know what that was really like.

I didn't realize train-hopping was still possible.
I know what you're thinking, but it's illegal and dangerous, so don't do it. But it was great. I wanted to be as authentic and respectful of that experience and try to capture it. I wanted all the details to be right. So the Sterno can and where his boots are scuffed and how his jeans are worn … when you are traveling that way, your clothes are going to get worn in a different way. I wanted all those details to be perfect because I wanted the audience to feel they were out there with him. I wanted to pay respect to that world.

Both Katherine Heigl and Ben Barnes seem to be playing and singing themeselves in the movie.
Everyone singing in the movie is actually singing; no one was dubbed. And in many cases they are singing live, because the performances were really good. I hadn't planned on it, but we shot several takes and they were all great, so I just ended up taking those performances. Ben did not know how to play guitar before, but he is just amazing. He took three months to learn this very specific finger-picking style that we needed for the film. Our plan was to get him so he was good enough to mime it so I could lay the music underneath that. But he got so good that actually some of the stuff we used he's actually playing. And I loved Katherine's voice. I don't think she'd call herself a professional singer, but for the film, you had to have the feeling like maybe she could be singing her daughter to sleep. It needed to be comforting and warm and available, and her voice just naturally has that quality.

What is your connection to that style of music?
I think it was partially where I grew up. Frankly, there isn't much to do in Indiana, so people do music or play basketball. And I'm not much into basketball. When I grew up, I was playing classic viola, but I also was this punk rocker into the Violent Femmes. I also would listen to Peruvian flute music or Bob Dylan or the Kronos Quartet. Music was just always a part of my life, all kinds of music. I love country music and I love early American folk. My mum's a pianist. My dad doesn't play any more but he is brilliant at music in his films. So I guess I got a double dose of the music DNA.

You got the train-hopping musician Hans to do the soundtrack for the film. How did that come about?
It was a huge gamble, because he'd never composed a film score and he really is a train-hopper, so he's hard to get a hold of. But we got him and myself and Lyle Warner, who's another traveller and plays Georgie in the film, and the three of us just rolled up our sleeves. We went to a recording studio and just did it. I had my viola and I would sing on something and Nick would play banjo and guitar and Lyle played the fiddle and a couple other things. We just kind of created the score. We were in studios for maybe five days; it was incredibly short. It was bizarre, things just kind of happened. I didn't intend to hire my train-hopper friend to be the composer, it just seemed to make sense, and I just had this feeling he would come up with something because he knew no tricks, that he would come up with something really unique and genuine — and he did. The piece from the beginning of the movie is, I think, is so moving and lovely and perfect. It is exactly right for the film, and I don't think anyone could have come up with that but Nick. I wanted the music to be in the spirit of the film, kind of organic. I wanted the film to tell a story of people who otherwise wouldn't get a chance to be listened to. And the music is the same thing; it's music from people who wouldn't otherwise have had a chance to have their voices heard. THR

BY THE NUMBERS

$1M
Global box office for *Texas Killing Fields*

0
Number of theaters in her hometown of Dayton, Ind., when she was growing up

$40
Her weekly salary for helping her father produce the 1986-88 NBC series *Crime Story*

IN POST-PRODUCTION

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WHEN THE EAGLE
MEETS THE DRAGON

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WILL HONG KONG PROTESTS LEAD TO A BLACKLIST?

The pro-democracy movement has a number of film industry sypathizers, but voicing support could get you banned in China (just ask Chow Yun-Fat) **BY KAREN CHU AND CLIFFORD COONAN**

"I'LL JUST MAKE LESS THEN," SAID Chow Yun-fat recently when tlking about to his supposed "ban" from the Chinese film industry. The actor — one of the most popular in China — has been a vocal supporter of the students participating in the Occupy Central Movement in Hong Kong and has also spoken out against the use of violence by the Hong Kong police. Soon after voicing his support to local media, however, a petition appeared on the Sina blog (China's version of Twitter) of prominent Chinese attorney Chen Guang-wu, urging Chinese film companies to refuse to hire Chow and asking Chinese netizens to boycott the films of a list of actors and filmmakers who had voiced their support of the Occupy protests. Chow's name was on top of a list that included such local stars and filmmakers like Miriam Yeung, Chapman To and Anthony Wong. The petition was retweeted 500 times and then deleted, but not before generating more headlines and chatter throughout the Hong Kong media.

Illustration by TOMI UM

While Chow's stand was lauded as commendable by many Hong Kong industryites and pundits, not everyone in the local film sector was quick to echo his support for the protesters. Most, in fact, are reluctant to discuss the movement at all: "We are businessmen, we don't comment on political issues" is the common refrain when asked.

Thus is the tricky situation for Hong Kong filmmakers working with and in China. While many may feel loyalty to Hong Kong or support the protestors, voicing that support could have a chilling effect on relationships — business or otherwise — with their powerful neighbors to the north.

Now, as the protests enter their sixth week, rumors are swirling about an industry ban on pro-movement film figures like Chow, with many in the Hong Kong film sector beginning to wonder what the long-term repurcussions will

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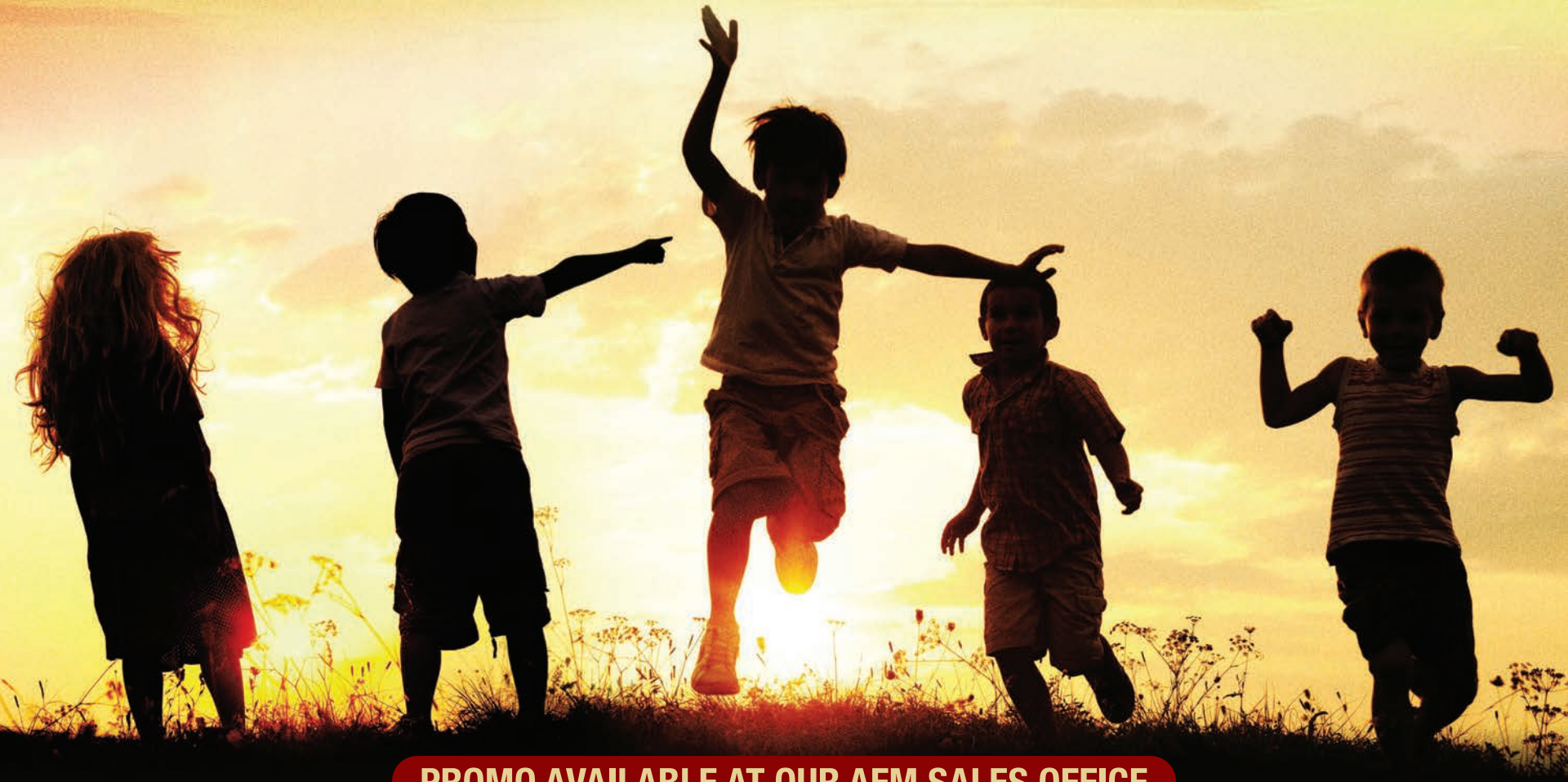

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be for not taking a public stand against the movement.

At this point, insiders appear divided over whether China's film sector will level some form of punishment.

"There are no official bans of the actors in question, just rumors on the Internet, and I hope there will be no repercussions for the actors speaking out in support of the protests," says Winnie Tsang, producer of the local hit *The Way We Dance*. "But I fear that investors might exercise self-censorship and prefer not to work with the actors in question in order to avoid trouble. Personally, unless there is an official announcement from the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT), I wouldn't believe the rumors on the Internet."

"It would be ridiculous to not work with the actors on the list. There are too many, and many of them are under contract with our company," adds Fred Tsui, Media Asia head of sales and international co-productions. "It doesn't make sense that we don't work with Miriam Yeung ever again [Media Asia will release *Don't Go Breaking My Heart 2*, starring Yeung, on Nov. 11 in China.] Besides, I don't think there is any anti-China element in the things the actors said, just in support of the student movement or against violence."

Blacklisting film industry figures is rare, but it's not unprecedented. In September, SAPPRFT released a circular that said actors and filmmakers with a criminal record — specifically involving drugs and prostitution — will be banned for life. While this was the only instance of Chinese authorities threatening a ban on those in the film and entertainment sector, there are instances of "unofficial" blacklisting. Regulators never openly cracked down on the makers of 2008's sexually explicit *Lust, Caution*, but the film's star, Tang Wei, was consipcuously absent from the big screen for a solid year. Similarly, there was no official response to a Hong Kong celebrity sex photo scandal in 2008, but its insiders will note that it's an open secret that the actor embroiled in the scandal, Edison Chen, was blacklisted in China.

"There was no official banning of Chen, but any projects with Chen attached did not go ahead, and after a while we noticed that there had been no films released in China with Chen in them," says John Chong, veteran producer of *The Infernal Affairs* trilogy.

Chinese authorities appeared to issue a not-so-subtle warning in an Oct. 22 editorial titled, "Don't You Eat Our Rice and Break Our Bowls at the Same Time," from the Xinhua News Agency — the official media channel of the Chinese Communist Party. It criticized the film-industry supporters of the Occupy movement and reminded them that they have been provided with a nice living by their fans in China since the Hong Kong handover in 1997.

Chow

Yeung

But not everyone within the Hong Kong film sector is lining up behind the protestors. Soon after Chow and other actors began to express their support of the so-called "umbrella revolution," local director Wong Jing tweeted on his microblog a "parting of the ways" with a number of prominent actors he had worked with.

"We've had very pleasant collaborations in the past, and I respect that you can have your own political stands," he wrote. "But I don't agree with them. Your contact information will be deleted from my mobile phone and computer. Have a good life!" He also tweeted that Chow was manipulated by the local media to speak out in support of the protestors.

Some wonder, however, if Wong's sentiment is genuine or if it is perhaps more a result of the complex political climate being faced by Hong Kong filmmakers working in China.

"Wong Jing has a film [*From Vegas to Macau 2*] out in the next Chinese New Year time slot in China, with Chow Yun-fat in the lead," says a prominent Hong Kong producer. "He has to show his patriotism and speak against the protest to counteract the things Chow has said in order to secure a release for the film in China."

There's certainly plenty at stake for Wong: The first *From Vegas to Macau*, also starring Chow, was released in 2014 in China and raked in $86 million at the box office.

One prominent Hong Kong producer says that Chow is probably not going to face a ban thanks to his enormous popularity throughout Asia. But some of the other film industry figures who have spoken out might not be so lucky: "Chow Yun-fat and Andy Lau are too stars too big to be banned. The rest though, might face a boycott." THR

Gone Girl

OCCUPY MOVEMENT TAKES A BITE OUT OF EXHIBITION SECTOR

A month of student protests rock the Hong Kong box office by 15 percent

THE OCCUPY CENTRAL Movement in Hong Kong, given the name "the umbrella revolution" by the international media, has been going on since Sept. 28. The sector in the local film industry hit hardest by the movement has been exhibition, which has seen audience numbers drop dramatically. For the first three weeks of the movement, box office shrunk 15 percent when compared with the same period last year.

Fifty-eight films were released and grossed $9.7 million during the weeks of Sept. 28-Oct. 16 in 2013, whereas the gross of 53 films this year has fallen to $8.4 million in the same period in 2014, according to figures supplied by the Hong Kong Motion Picture Industry Association.

"Our films released during the start of the movement took a big hit, I'd say it was 50 percent less of our prediction," says Winnie Tsang, managing director of Golden Scene, whose business mainly lies in film distribution. The company released *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby* locally, both the *Him* and *Her* versions, on Oct. 2, and took in a disappointing $200,000.

The Golden Era

The Golden Era, directed by local A-list director Ann Hui and starring Tang Wei, has also struggled, taking in just $129,000 in its first five day of release.

"*The Golden Era* was very much affected by the movement. It was released at the same time as the start of the movement, and the box office was dismal," says one Hong Kong exhibitor. "*Gone Girl, also* released Oct. 2, also had a disappointing opening when considering the draw of director David Fincher and Ben Affleck and the film itself." *Gone Girl* had an opening weekend of $514,000 but as of Oct. 28 had grossed just $2.2 million.

The protests have created bottlenecks in an already crowded Hong Kong that have prevented some moviegoers from reaching cinemas. And with confrontations between police and protestors receiving almost nonstop TV coverage, insiders say the drama on the small screen is keeping moviegoers at home.

Another reason for the dip in theater attendance could be the fact that many of the films now in release were marketed toward younger audiences, many of whom are participating in the protests.

Says Tsang, "Things are getting better, but they are not yet back to the level pre-protests." — K.C.

YEUNG: TPG TOP PHOTO GROUP/NEWSCOM. YUN FAT: STEPHEN MORRISON/EPA/NEWSCOM.

Rachael Leigh Cook

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AFM 2014 Line-up

Post Production

SWORDMASTER

Producer :TSUI Hark
Director :Derek YEE
Starring :LIN Geng-xin Peter HO
Genre :Martial Arts Action

Post Production

I AM SOMEBODY

Director :Derek YEE
Genre :Drama

Post Production

WHERE IS THE DRAGON?

Directors :Sing Choong FOO
Betty TANG
Voice Talents :Ziyi ZHANG
Leehom WANG
Genre :Animation

Post Production

INSANITY

Producer :Derek YEE Director :David LEE
Starring :LAU Ching Wan HUANG Xiaoming Fiona SIT
Alex FONG
Genre :Psychological Thriller

Completed

THE WHITE HAIRED WITCH OF LUNAR KINGDOM

Director :Jacob CHEUNG Chi-Leung
Costume Designer :Tim YIP
Starring :FAN Bing Bing
HUANG Xiaoming
Vincent ZHAO
Genre :Period Action

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The Snow Queen 2

TODAY

8:45 AM Fairmont 2, ***Casanova Variations***, Alfama Films, 118 mins.; Broadway 1, ***Labyrinth of Lies***, Beta Cinema, 121 mins.; Loews 2, ***Phurbu & Tenzin***, China Film Promotion International, 118 mins.; AMC 1, ***The Absent One***, Trustnordisk, 119 mins.; Loews 1, ***Unlucky Plaza***, Media Luna New Films Ug, 22 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***Wild Tales***, Film Factory Entertainment, 122 mins.

9:00 AM Doubletree #2, ***40-Love***, Films Distribution, 95 mins.; AMC 5, ***Accused***, Fortissimo Films, 97 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Deathday Party***, Arclight Films, 100 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***June***, Raven Banner Entertainment; Fairmont 1, ***Miss Meadows***, Myriad Pictures 92 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***Moomins on the Riviera***, Indie Sales; Broadway 3, ***Next Time I'll Aim for the Heart***, Kinology; AMC 6, ***The Seventh Lie***, Bravos Pictures Ltd., 94 mins.; AMC 4, ***Tom Little and the Magic Mirror,*** Sola Media Gmbh, 90 mins.; Loews 3, ***Turkey Shoot***, Lightning Entertainment, 90 mins.

11:00 AM Tunnel Post #1, ***Casual Encounters***, Carnaby International, 86 mins.; Fairmont 1, ***Dawn Patrol***, Red Sea Media Inc., 96 mins.; Loews 3, ***Farah Goes Bang***, Angel Grace Productions, 90 mins.; Loews 1, ***Guardian***, Birch Tree Entertainment, 90 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***Hidden in the Woods***, WTFilms; AMC 1, ***How to Make Love Like an Englishman***, The Solution Entertainment Group, 100 mins.; Fairmont 4, I-Lived Bleiberg Entertainment Llc., 96 mins.; AMC 4, ***Kidnapping Freddy Heineken,*** Embankment Films Ltd., 90 mins.; Loews 2, ***Oxv: The Manual***, Montecristo International, 105 mins.; AMC 2, ***Ruth & Alex***, Myriad Pictures; Broadway 4, ***Samba Gaumont*** ,115 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***Stephen King's A Good Marriage***, Screen Media, 90 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***The Eyes Diary***, Sahamongkolfilm International Co. Ltd., 100 mins.; AMC 7, ***The Snow Queen II: The Snow King***, Wizart Animation, 80 mins.; Broadway 2, ***Theeb***, Fortissimo Films, 100 mins.

1 :00 PM Fairmont 5 , ***Alex of Venice***, Screen Media; Loews 2, ***Ciudad Delirio***, Media Luna New Films Ug, 90 mins.; Broadway 2, ***Far From Men,*** Pathe International (Fr), 90 mins.; AMC 1, ***Future Shock! The Story of 2000 AD,*** Metrodome International, 105 mins.; AMC 6, ***Gangster Pay Day***, Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co., Ltd; AMC 3, ***Jackie & Ryan***, Highland Film Group; Fairmont 3, ***Keeping Rosy,*** Parkland Pictures; Fairmont 1, ***Life in Extremes,*** Kaleidoscope Film Distribution Ltd., 90 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Marshland***, Film Factory Entertainment, 104 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***Match***,Premiere Entertainment Group, 90 mins.; Broadway 3, ***Over Your Dead Body***, Mongrel Media Inc., 93 mins.; Loews 3, ***Rain Doll***, Wide, 100 mins.; Broadway 4, ***SPL 2 — A Time For Consequences***, Bravos Pictures Ltd.; AMC 4, ***Superbob***, Genesis Film Sales; Loews 1, ***The House at the End of Time***, Jinga Films, 100 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***The Librarian***, Red Sea Media Inc., 90 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***The Surface***, Shoreline Entertainment, 86 mins.; AMC 2, ***Wild Life***, Le Pacte, 114 mins.

3:00 PM AMC 5, ***99 Homes,*** Hyde Park International, 95 mins.; Loews 2, ***Ask Me Anything***, Lightning Entertainment, 100 mins.; AMC 3, ***Club Life,*** Bleiberg Entertainment Llc., 92 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***Dancer and the Dame***, Pure Flix Entertainment, 90 mins.; Loews 3, ***Danger Dolls***, Birch Tree Entertainment, 97 mins.; Broadway 2, ***Foodies***, Fortissimo Films; Doubletree #2, ***Hunting the Phantom***, Highland Film Group, 90 mins.; Fairmont 1, ***In Paradise***, Sandbox Productions Inc., 103 mins.; AMC 4, ***October Gale***, Myriad Pictures; Tunnel Post #1, ***Poseso***, Filmsharks International, 81 mins.; Loews 1, ***Road 47,*** Montecristo International, 107 mins.; AMC 1, ***Set Fire to the Stars***, The Works International; Doubletree #1, ***The Face of an Angel***, Westend Films, 100 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***The Last Survivors***, Kaleidoscope Film Distribution Ltd., 95 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***The Magic Brush,*** All Rights Entertainment Ltd., 87 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***White Tiger,*** Gorilla Pictures; AMC 6, ***Yugo & Lala 2***, Golden Network Asia Ltd., 76 mins.;

5:00 PM Doubletree #2, ***A Hitman's Solitude Before the Shot***, Picture Tree International Gmbh, 82 mins.; Loews 1, Aire Libre Media Luna New Films Ug, 102 mins.; AMC 5, ***Callejero***, 525 Films,105 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Chasing Taste,*** Aspire Talent Management, 89 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***Cooties***, The Solution Entertainment Group, 105 mins.; AMC 3, ***Cub***, Kinology; Loews 2, ***Lucky Stiff***, Arclight Films; Loews 3, ***Painkillers***, Darclight Films, 102 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Savva***, Glukoza Production, 115 mins.; Fairmont 1, ***Soldiers of the Damned***, VMI Worldwide, 94 mins.; Broadway 4, ***The 108 Demon-Kings***, EuropaCorp; AMC 4, ***The Last Word***, Altitude Film Sales, 90 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***The Little Medic: The Secret Mission of the Bodynauts***, Beta Cinema, 75 mins.; Broadway 1, ***The Silent Storm***, Westend Films, 102 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***Two Step***, Films Distribution, 93 mins.; AMC 6, ***Uncle Victory***, Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co. Ltd; Fairmont 4, ***Wish You Well***, American Cinema International, 108 mins.

7:00 PM Loews 2, ***Bonobo***, Montecristo International, 83 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***Dream Flight***, Encore Film Co. Ltd., 140 mins.; Loews 1, ***Encounter***, Sahara Vision Productions, 82 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***Hellion***, VMI Worldwide, 94 mins.; Fairmont 1, ***Other People's Children***, Shoreline Entertainment, 80 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***Rats***, Uglichin and Co., 90 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***The Candlelight Murders***, Goliath Film & Media Holdings Inc., 86 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***The Games Maker 3D***, Filmsharks International, 111 mins.

FRIDAY, NOV. 7

8:45 AM Fairmont 5, ***Casanova***, Variations Alfama Films, 118 mins.; Broadway 2, ***Grüss Gott, Senor Ramon***, Mongrel Media Inc., 120 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***Sorry If I Call You Love***, Film

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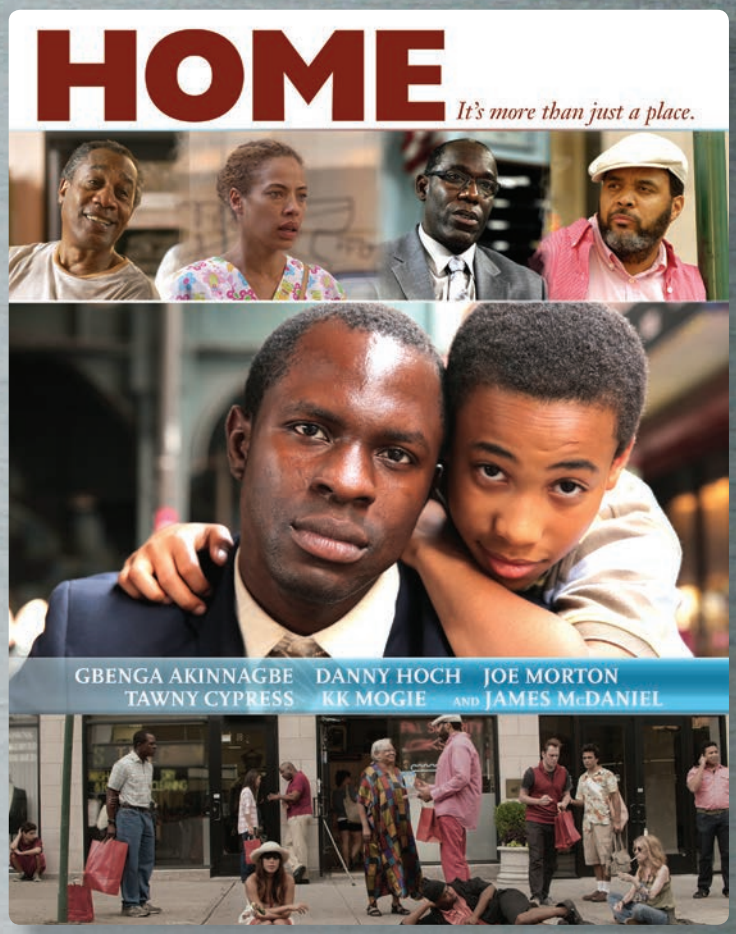

Inspirational Drama / 112 min. / USA / 2014

Romance Drama / 94 min. / USA / 2014

Female-lead Comedy / 90 min. / USA / 2014

Action, Dance / 89 min. / USA / 2014

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November 6, 2014

Opening Ceremony
- Time : 10:00AM
- Venue : Main Entrance, Loews Hotel

Seminar - Hong Kong: Your Ideal Platform to the Co-Production Market in China*
- Time : 2:30PM – 4:00PM
- Venue : AFM Studio, Loews Hotel

Hong Kong Reception**
- Time : 5:30PM – 7:30PM
- Venue : Ocean & Vine Restaurant, Loews Hotel

* No RSVP required and open to all AFM badge-holders on a first come, first served basis
** By invitation only

HONG KONG Cinemas at AFM

But Always
By Snow Zou
Emperor Motion Pictures
Nov 8 (Sat) 11:00
AMC Santa Monica 7

The Deathday Party
By Eddie Tse
Easternlight Films Ltd.
Nov 6 (Thu) 09:00
Fairmont 3

Don't Go Breaking My Heart 2
By Johnnie To
Media Asia Distribution Ltd.
Nov 8 (Sat) 15:00
AMC Santa Monica 2

Gangster Pay Day
By Po Cheung Lee
Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co., Ltd.
Nov 6 (Thu) 13:00
AMC Santa Monica 6
Nov 7 (Fri) 15:00
Doubletree 2

Kung Fu Jungle
By Teddy Chen
Emperor Motion Pictures
Nov 7 (Fri) 15:00
AMC Santa Monica 7

SPL2 - A Time For Consequences (Asia-Pacific Regions Sales) *
By Soi Cheang
Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co., Ltd.
Nov 7 (Fri) 11:00 Doubletree 1
* 25 minutes Joint Footage

(European & American Regions Sales) **
By Soi Cheang
Bravos Pictures Limited
Nov 6 (Thu) 13:00 Broadway Cineplex 4
** Footage Screening

The Seventh Lie
By James HUNG
Bravos Pictures Limited
Nov 6 (Thu) 09:00
AMC Santa Monica 6

Uncle Victory
By Meng ZHANG
Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co., Ltd.
Nov 6 (Thu) 17:00
AMC Santa Monica 6

Undercover Duet ®
By Mark Wu
China 3D Digital Distribution Limited
Nov 9 (Sun) 19:00
Fairmont 2
®Reservation Requested

Zombie Fight Club *
By Joe Chien
Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co., Ltd.
Nov 7 (Fri) 11:00
Doubletree 1
* 25 minutes Joint Footage

Hong Kong Companies at American Film Market (AFM) 2014

All Rights Entertainment	Loews - 540
Bravos Pictures Limited	Loews - 544
Distribution Workshop	Loews - 604
Easternlight Films Ltd.	Loews - 729
Edko Films Ltd	Loews - 452
Emperor Motion Pictures	Loews - 529
Fortissimo Films	Loews - 817
Golden Network Asia Limited	Loews - 437
Media Asia Distribution Limited	Loews - 517
Mega-Vision Project Workshop Limited	Loews - 534
Mei Ah Entertainment Group Ltd	Loews - 532
China 3D Digital Distribution Ltd	Loews - 460
Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co., Ltd.	Loews - 538
Universe Films Distribution Co., Ltd.	Loews - 328

Discover more about Hong Kong film industry, please visit HKTDC Booth at 5/F Atrium, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel (Opposite to the Buyer's Lounge)

Factory Entertainment, 120 mins.

9:00 AM Broadway 1, ***After the Ball***, Myriad Pictures, 90 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***Against the Sun***, Goldcrest Films International, 99 mins.; AMC 3, ***Asterix: The Mansions of the Gods***, SND MG Groupe, 85 mins.; AMC 2, ***Captain Sabertooth and the Treasure of Lama Rama***, Sola Media Gmbh, 90 mins.; AMC 1, ***Darker Than Night***, 6 Sales, 100 mins.; AMC 4, ***Easy Sex, Sad Movies***, Filmax International, 90 mins.; Broadway 4, ***Goodnight Mommy***, Films Distribution, 99 mins.; Broadway 3, ***Hyena***, Independent, 112 mins.; Loews 3, ***It's Only Make Believe***, Princ Films, 91 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***Kelly & Cal***, Electric Entertainment, 107 mins.; Ocean Scr #, ***Learning to Drive,*** Westend Films, 105 mins.; AMC 6, ***Northmen — A Viking Saga***, Salt, 97 mins.; Loews 2, ***Painkillers***, Darclight Films, 102 mins.; Fairmont 1, ***Split Second***, Goliath Film & Media Holdings Inc., 82 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Strange Blood***, Bleiberg Entertainment Llc., 85 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***The Farewell Party***, Beta Cinema. 93 mins.; AMC 5, ***The Gate***, Gaumont; AMC 7, ***Tiger House***, Altitude Film Sales. 85 mins.; Loews 1, ***What Lola Wants***, Arclight Films, 81 mins.

11:00 Fairmont 2, ***Allies***, Parkland Pictures, 98 mins.; Loews 2, ***Cowboys***, Wide, 104 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***Death in Buenos Aires***, Film Factory Entertainment, 86 mins.; Broadway 3, ***El Americano 3D: The Movie***, Filmsharks International; Ocean Scr #, ***Esio Trot***, Red Arrow International, 90 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***L.A. Slasher***, Archstone Distribution, 86 mins.; AMC 7, ***Late Spring***, M-Line Distribution,100 mins.; Loews 3, ***Luna***, Media Luna New Films Ug, 104 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***Millionaire Dog***, Deaplaneta, 90 mins.; Fairmont 1, Mourning Grave, 9Ers Entertainment, 90 mins.; Broadway 1, ***Skin Trade***, Hyde Park International, 96 mins.; Broadway 2, ***Song of the Sea***, Westend Films, 90 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***SPL 2 — A Time for Consequences***, Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co. Ltd.; Broadway 4, ***The Diabolical***, Content Media Corp., 90 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***The Forger,*** The Solution Entertainment Group, 92 mins.; AMC 3, ***The Hero of Color City,*** Moviehouse Entertainment,20 mins.; Loews 1, ***The Pirate***, Vision Films, 101 mins.; AMC 1 Theeb, Fortissimo Films, 100 mins.; AMC 6, ***Yugo & Lala 2***, Golden Network Asia Ltd., 76 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Zombie Fight Club***, Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co. Ltd.

1:00 PM AMC 2, ***Battle for Skyark***, Empress Road Pictures, 88 mins.; AMC 7, ***Borning***, Svensk Filmindustri Ab, 93 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Casual Encounters,*** Carnaby International, 86 mins.; Ocean Scr #, ***Dark Was the Night***, Premiere Entertainment Group; Loews 1, ***Encounter***, Sahara Vision Productions, 82 mins.; Loews 2, ***Eva Braun***, Wide, 82 mins.; Broadway 4, ***Extraordinary Tales***, BAC Films, 70 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Fear of Water,*** California Pictures Inc., 103 mins.; AMC 1, ***Gentle***, Oration Films, 100 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***In Paradise***, Sandbox Productions Inc., 103 mins.; Loews 3, ***Legend of the Pandas***, China Film Promotion International, 78 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***Life Partners***, Myriad Pictures, 93 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***Not My Day***, Picture Tree International Gmbh, 115 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***Poseso***, Filmsharks International, 81 Mins.; AMC 6, ***Red Knot***, Umedia International; AMC 5, ***Sex, Love & Therapy***, SND M6 Groupe, 90 mins.; Broadway 3, ***Shrew's Nest***, Film Factory Entertainment, 91 mins.; Broadway 1, ***The Barber,*** The Little Film Co., 95 mins.; AMC 4, ***The Last Word***, Altitude Film Sales; Fairmont 1, ***The Night Crew***, Premiere Entertainment Group; Tunnel Post #1, ***Tokyo Fiancee,*** Films Distribution, 100 mins.

3:00 PM Fairmont 4, ***A Dark Reflection***, Artist View Entertainment Inc., 95 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Agnieszka***, Arri Worldsales, 98 mins.; Ocean Scr #, ***Boulevard***, Inception Film Partners Llc., 88 mins.; Loews 1, ***Brancusi From Eternity***, Artis Film Romania, 100 mins.; AMC 5, ***Comet***, Content Media Corp., 91 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***Gangster Pay Day***, Star Alliance Movies (HK) Co. Ltd; AMC 7, ***Kung Fu Jungle***, Emperor Motion Pictures, 100 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Let's Kill Ward's Wife***, Epic Pictures Group; Broadway 1, ***Marshland***, Film Factory Entertainment, 104 mins.; AMC 2, ***Moomins on ohe Riviera***, Indie Sales; Fairmont 2, ***Mountain Men***, Myriad Pictures; Loews 3, ***No Thank You***, Media Luna New Films Ug, 95 mins.; Broadway 4, ***Now Add Honey***, Lightning Entertainment; AMC 4, ***Sword of Vengeance***, Protagonist Pictures; Fairmont 1, ***The 7Th Dwarf***, Global Screen Gmbh, 80 mins.; Fairmont 5, The Canal Jinga Films, 90 mins.; Broadway 2, ***The Ignorance of Blood***, Latido, 109 mins.; AMC 6, ***The Pilgrim — Paulo Coelho's Best Story***, Picture Tree International Gmbh, 112 mins.; AMC 1, ***Tigers***, The Match Factory, 90 mins.; Broadway 3, ***Vengeance of an Assassin***, Sahamongkolfilm International Co. Ltd., 93 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***Wicked Flying Monkeys 3D***, Filmsharks International, 90 mins.; Loews 2, ***Zombie: The Resurrection of Tim Zom***, Wide, 72 Mins.

5:00 PM Loews 3, ***All Gods Children***, Artis Film Romania, 100 mins.; AMC 5, ***Any Day***, VMI Worldwide, 100 mins.; AMC 4, ***Charlie's Farm***, Shoreline Entertainment, 93 mins.; Loews 1, ***Chasing Taste***, Aspire Talent Management, 89 mins.; AMC 3, ***Dear White People***, The Exchange, 108 mins.; Broadway 4, ***Dinosaur Island***, Arclight Films; Fairmont 1, ***Drones***, Voltage Pictures, 103 mins.; Broadway 3, ***Get Santa***, Altitude Film Sales, 93 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Haemoo***, Finecut Co. Ltd., 100 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***Madame Bovary***, Radiant Films International, 118 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Midnight Sun***, Hyde Park International, 97 mins.; AMC 6, ***Parasyte Part 1***, Toho Co. Ltd., 108 mins.; Fairmont 5, ***Shelby: The Dog Who Saved Christmas***, Highland Film Group; AMC 1, ***The Tenor Lirico Spinto***, More In Group, 121 mins.; Loews 2, ***Turkey Shoot***, Lightning Entertainment, 90 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***Welcome to Me***, Cargo Entertainment, 84 mins.; Fairmont 2, ***What We Did on Our Holiday***, Independent, 96 mins.; Fairmont 4, ***Zero Tolerance***, Phoenix Worldwide Entertainment

7:00 PM Fairmont 2, ***Afterdeath***, VMI Worldwide; Fairmont 5, ***Bikini Model***, Academy New Films International, 85 mins.; Doubletree #2, ***Dummie the Mummy and the Golden Scarab***, Dutch Features Global Entertainment, 80 mins.; Fairmont 3, ***Gone Astray***, Goliath Film & Media Holdings, Inc., 85 mins.; Loews 1, ***Leading Lady,*** Summer Hill Films, 96 mins.; Doubletree #1, ***Love Addict***, Tricoast Worldwide, 95 mins.; Loews 3, ***Nick***, Montecristo International, 92 mins; Fairmont 1, ***Resilient Love***, American Cinema International, 89 mins.; Ocean Scr #, ***Roaring Currents***, Cj E&M Corp./CJ Entertainment, 25 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, ***The Games Maker 3D***, Filmsharks International, 111 mins.; Loews 2, ***The Timber***, Red Sea Media Inc., 95 mins.

Northmen — A Viking Saga

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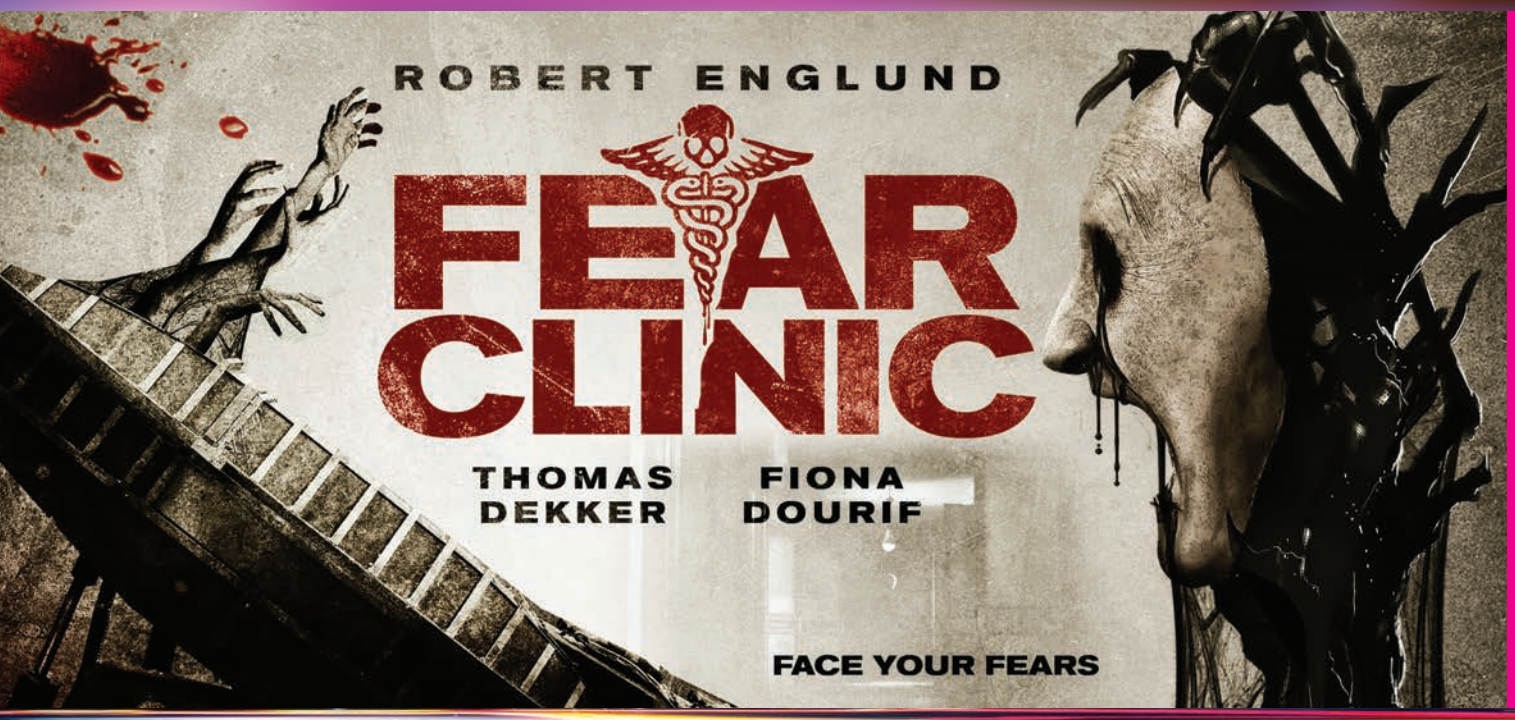

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Inherent Vice

The first Thomas Pynchon novel to hit the big screen gets vibrant but not entirely satisfying handling by Paul Thomas Anderson

BY TODD MCCARTHY

WHAT MIGHT HAVE SEEMED POISED AS A PRIMO 1970S counterculture companion piece to *Boogie Nights* emerges as something less than that in *Inherent Vice*. The first filmmaker OK'd to adapt a Thomas Pynchon novel for the screen, Paul Thomas Anderson has made a zigzagging, effortfully comic mystery that sends a weed- and beach-loving private dick on a journey through the mash of corrupt cops, druggies, new-age cultists, hookers, Nazi bikers, Black Power toughs, real estate tycoons, Nixonian politicos and free love chicks that was L.A. 44 years ago. But only fitfully does the film manage the kind of liftoff achieved by Pynchon's often riotous 2009 novel and, most disappointingly, it offers a only a pale re-creation of such a vibrant place and time.

Set in 1970, Pynchon's book is a Day-Glo doper variation on Raymond Chandler, cut with James Ellroy and Robert Towne, about a stoned white knight who can navigate the city's power structure from top to bottom and deal with all the freaks because he's one of them. The themes of civic corruption and big-money influence and everyone having their price are unchanged since Philip Marlowe took them on several generations back, but providing this updated tale with its special pungency is the immediacy of lost innocence; what was beautiful and groovy and far out up to 1969 all went south in the wake of the Manson murders, on top of which you had Richard Nixon as Southern California's fresh gift to the nation.

Through the miasma of dope smoke and spiritual malaise shuffles Doc Sportello (Joaquin Phoenix), who at his beachfront pad in Gordita Beach is surprised to behold Shasta Fay Hepworth (Katherine Waterston), a butterfly from his past who shows up to ask his professional help in tracking down her secret lover, big-shot land developer Mickey Wolfmann, who's vanished.

Wolfmann's disappearance is merely the trip-wire for all sorts of other, mostly disreputable characters to bisect Doc's orbit, many with some sort of connection to Wolfmann. An absurd chain of events leads to Doc being accused of murder by buzz-cut cop Bigfoot Bjornsen (Josh Brolin), an old nemesis who walks and talks like he just stepped off the set of a lewd version of *Dragnet*. Doc wriggles out of this but becomes pressed by both Bigfoot and the FBI to help locate Wolfmann and counterculture figures he's suspected of knowing, among them Coy Harlington (Owen Wilson), a musician friend who is thought to have died but rematerializes in the weirdest places.

Adapting a book for the second time in his career (after *There Will Be Blood*), Anderson has boiled down Pynchon's sprawling yarn to its dramatic essence. Still, viewers coming to this material cold will find it pretty daunting to connect all the dots. What really counts here, as in a head-scratching classic like *The Big Sleep*, is the sizzle of individual scenes, the atmosphere, the innuendo and the electricity among the actors.

In this regard, *Inherent Vice* is intermittently successful, but only up to a point. The Nabokovian names Pynchon bestowed upon many of his characters suggest the broadly comic context he's created for them: Dr. Tubeside, Sauncho Smilax and Petunia Leeway, just for starters. Brolin's hard-boiled and hard-core Bigfoot is the most prominent of these bizarre creations; intimidating one moment and provocatively sucking on a chocolate-covered banana the next, the man is clearly deranged, though not without great cunning.

What would have helped better sustain the film's humorous sensibility is a self-deprecating performer capable of winning over the audience both as an amusing straight man and an endearing fool. Phoenix, for all his skill in serious movies like *Walk the Line*, *Her* and *The Master*, doesn't possess this sort of levity or mutability of spirit.

As Doc's unlikely part-time squeeze, a bee-hived deputy D.A., Phoenix's *Walk the Line* co-star Reese Witherspoon plays it prim until she gets stoned one night at his place. Meanwhile, Waterston assumes center stage in a compellingly strange way in a long scene with Doc toward the end, while Brolin and Wilson are strong as very odd characters.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment about the film is the relative absence of Los Angeles as a major physical character. The film feels dominated by medium and tight close-ups, and, whether for budgetary or artistic reasons, makes no real attempt to do what the book did, which was to convey with acute sensitivity and insight the feel of different parts of the city: the beach community where Doc lives, the hippie magnet of the Sunset Strip, the musicians' lair of Topanga, the deteriorating downtown of officialdom and other outlying areas. In his first few films, L.A. native Anderson made a point of evoking the city in knowing and specific ways, but here, with such a ripe opportunity to make a great City of Angels movie, it's almost as if he's deliberately spurned the invitation.

Cast *Joaquin Phoenix, Josh Brolin, Owen Wilson, Katherine Waterston, Reese Witherspoon, Jena Malone, Benicio Del Toro*
Director *Paul Thomas Anderson// 148 minutes*

Jackie & Ryan

Katherine Heigl turns in a heartfelt performance in this homey but surprisingly enjoyable ride through honest mid-America

BY DEBORAH YOUNG

Heigl is a single mom with a knack for music.

JACKIE & RYAN, THE NEW film from writer-director Ami Canaan Mann (*Texas Killing Fields*), is a small, beautifully modulated work about recession-strapped America and the power of a fortuitous meeting that alters the course of two musicians' lives for the better.

The sunny, soap-and-water characters and thoroughly upbeat message may not be the stuff great films are made of, but the modesty of the story, the simple approach and honest emotions all come together in a satisfying whole. As a bonus, rollicking period music brings a smile every time somebody pulls out a banjo.

The two attractive headliners should help locate audiences: Katherine Heigl of *Knocked Up*, *Grey's Anatomy* and NBC's new *State of Affairs* and Ben Barnes (*The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*). The quality is there for additional festival exposure, even if one feels the whistle of the small screen blowing at the end of the line.

Ryan (Barnes) is a traveling musician, a happy-go-lucky drifter who romantically train-hops around the country like it was the Depression instead of the recession. His carefully crafted music also nods to pre-1930s folk tunes. A lyrical opening sequence communicates his sense of joy and freedom riding the rails through America's magnificent plains and mountains, all the way to Ogden, Utah. Blink, and you will miss a quick glimpse of the American flag flying proudly as a Bruce Springsteen industrial landscape flashes by the moving train. It's subtle, but it's there.

While busking on the street with a violinist friend, he meets self-possessed single mom Jackie (an ash blonde Heigl). She, too, had a musical past as a successful pop singer signed with a record company, but that seems to be another lifetime. Right now, she's preoccupied with a messy divorce and a battle for child custody. Their brief love story could hardly be simpler, but it works because of the actors' light touch and the extreme low key in which it all plays out. Mann (daughter of director Michael Mann) hits her stride using a fast, delicate style that describes ordinary people without tears or self-pity or great drama. A funeral scene only a few minutes long manages to be affecting.

The small-town setting with its schools, supermarkets and fiddling contests is pure, unadorned Americana, where a general shortage of cash afflicts everyone. Duane Manwiller's camerawork doesn't waste time idealizing the vast, empty, snow-dusted plains of Utah, nor does Mann pretend the locals are any better than the New Yorkers Jackie left behind. Still, as she tells her dubious daughter (Emily Alyn Lind), it wasn't much fun growing up in Ogden, but it's a nice place to be from.

Street musician Nick Hans wrote most of the tuneful songs, based on traditional melodies, that Barnes and Heigl sing in the film.

Sales *Highland Film Group*
Cast *Katherine Heigl, Ben Barnes, Emily Alyn Lind, Clea DuVall*
Director *Ami Canaan Mann*
90 minutes

October Gale

Not even Patricia Clarkson can elevate this domestic-siege thriller full of holes and dubious motivations BY JOHN DEFORE

PATRICIA CLARKSON RETURNS TO HER *Cairo Time* director Ruba Nadda in *October Gale*, a film that starts off as a quiet exploration of grief but soon becomes a trapped-in-your-home thriller. It's easy to understand the actress' willingness to work again with the director, whose previous film earned her some of the best notices in an already justly praised career. But did she read the script first? Built on a premise that makes no sense and relying on one improbable decision after another, the fairly silly film will find few takers at the box office despite the drawing power of Clarkson and co-stars Scott Speedman and Tim Roth (whose appearance is brief).

Clarkson plays Helen, a doctor returning to the weekend cottage where her husband died a year ago. The only house on one of the many little islands in Ontario's Parry Sound, it would be a lonely place even if it weren't for countless reminders of their idyllic marriage, which was cut short when he ill-advisedly boated into a storm.

A storm seems to be brewing today, as well, and around the time it picks up, Helen gets a visitor — William, a bloodied man (Speedman) who crawls in unannounced through her side door, requiring help she's luckily equipped to give. But after she removes a bullet from a man whose wound suggests trouble, how should she deal with him?

However handsome he is, it seems unlikely a smart woman like Helen (Clarkson's performance suggests unfussy competence) would take William at his word that the people pursuing him will kill her as well when they reach the island. (The claim is even more dubious — make that impossible to believe — once we learn the nature of the threat.) Nevertheless, the doctor who just happens to be a crack shot with a hunting rifle teams up with him to defend her home through the night.

Clarkson comes to the aid of Speedman.

Then, in the middle of preparing for an attack (and after taking a spill in the lake that has a puzzling suicidal shading), Helen kisses William by her fireplace. Nothing between the characters has prepared us for this, and nothing to come will justify further moments of flirtation.

In another context, an out-of-nowhere attraction between a hunk and a woman 16 years his senior might play as a subversion of Hollywood's tendency to toss young beauties at older male actors. But there's nothing subversive in *October Gale*'s tone — except perhaps for its total abandonment of suspense-film logic once Roth and his Canuck sidekick pull up for the third-act climax.

Sales *Myriad Pictures*
Cast *Patricia Clarkson, Scott Speedman, Tim Roth, Callum Keith Rennie*
Director *Ruba Nadda*
90 minutes

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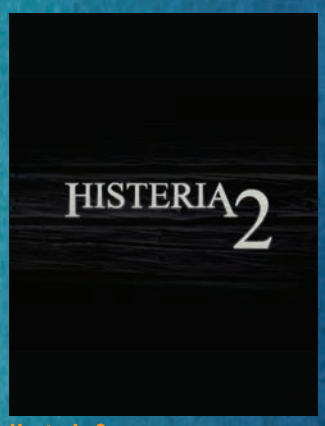

Hysteria 2
Pre-Production
Horror

A mother's search for her kidnapped daughter brings her to an abandoned house with chilling results.

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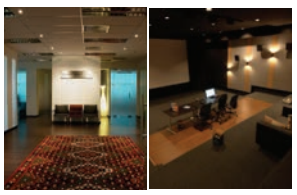

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The New Girlfriend

Romain Duris and Anais Demoustier bond over love, loss and lingerie in Francois Ozon's delicious latest

BY DAVID ROONEY

THE SEDUCTIVE MYSTERY fiction of British writer Ruth Rendell has proved highly adaptable source material for a number of non-Anglo European filmmakers, among them Claude Chabrol in *La Ceremonie*, Claude Miller in *Alias Betty* and Pedro Almodovar in *Live Flesh*. Francois Ozon joins the list with *The New Girlfriend*, spun from a 1985 short story by Rendell into a delectable riff on transformation, desire and sexuality that blends melodrama with mischievous humor and an understated strain of Hitchcockian suspense.

Ozon has carved out a career of scratching beneath the surface of the contemporary French bourgeoisie to expose the many deceptions, fetishes, transgressions and longings that lurk there. This movie carries on in that vein, even if it's something of a tease in that it continually threatens to turn dark without fully going there. Compared to the nine-page Rendell story, this very loose adaptation is subversive but just as often playful and even tender in tone.

The New Girlfriend opens with a brilliant compressed narrative that shows Ozon in dazzling command, aided by cinematographer Pascal Marti's sinuous camerawork. An exquisite young bride in a white coffin is revealed to be Laura (Isild Le Besco), whose lifelong best friend Claire (Anais Demoustier) delivers an emotional eulogy at the funeral during which she swears to watch over Laura's infant daughter Lucie and her widowed husband David (Romain Duris). In key snippets from the dead woman's life, we see her grow from a baby Brigitte Bardot to a wife and mother before succumbing to a swift illness.

Claire is too depressed following the funeral to check in on her goddaughter and David, but after a nudge from her grounded husband Gilles (Raphael Personnaz), she drops by his house unannounced.

A major reveal happens roughly 10 minutes in and is the plot point from which the entire psychosexual scenario evolves. So it can't be considered much of a spoiler to disclose that Claire finds David quite literally compensating for the sudden absence of a maternal figure in little Lucie's life by getting in touch with his feminine side.

Duris is a young father with a secret.

Shocked at first by David's open admission of a long-standing cross-dressing habit, Claire also is tickled to be in on his secret. Duris makes the confession seem the most natural thing in the world.

Keeping all this from Gilles, Claire impulsively comes up with the name of Virginie for the "girlfriend" she ends up spending so much time with, and it sticks. She helps David/Virginie with his wigs, makeup and wardrobe choices, and he becomes a surrogate for her friendship with Laura.

Ozon has fun here playing with the idea of the double in terms that owe much to Hitchcock. But what's crucial is that the film never mocks David/Virginie. Quite the contrary, in fact. That's especially true in a marvelous scene in which he and Claire go to a gay bar where a drag performer lip-synchs a 1970s song called "Une Femme avec toi."

It's when the suggestion of sexual attraction creeps into the friendship between Claire and Virginie that Ozon gets a little tied up in the complex negotiation of those feelings. Still, this wonderfully acted film yields touching rewards in its observation of the lingering power of love after death.

Sales *Films Distribution*
Cast *Romain Duris, Anais Demoustier, Isild Le Besco, Raphael Personnaz* **Director** *Francois Ozon*
107 minutes

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Ruth & Alex

Good casting gives this amiable marital dramedy considerable appeal, but the script is a bit of fixer-upper

BY LESLIE FELPERIN

Married couple Keaton and Freeman are selling their Williamsburg loft.

Morgan Freeman and Diane Keaton play a long-married couple who put their Brooklyn apartment on the market in *Ruth & Alex*, an amiable dramedy that raises its curb appeal with fine casting. Director Richard Loncraine's film needs the stars as an extra selling point since the script, adapted by Charlie Peters from Jill Ciment's novel, *Heroic Measures*, has a tendency to go soft and self-congratulatory too often. Nevertheless, the reliable marquee-name actors will attract ticket buyers, especially in metropolitan areas and from the "mature" demographic.

The eponymous Ruth (Keaton) and Alex (Freeman) have lived in a spacious Williamsburg apartment for nearly 40 years, ever since they married in the 1970s. But their digs are many flights of stairs up, and while they're both spry enough to make the climb now, Ruth worries it won't be so easy for them in the future. Even their adorable dog, a wiry wee terrier named Dorothy, has developed back trouble. It turns out that she'll need expensive surgery, prompting a subplot that weaves smoothly in and out of the action throughout.

Pressured by Ruth's real-estate-agent niece Lily (Cynthia Nixon, sporting exactly the right kind of choppy haircut and brittle smile), they've agreed to put the apartment on the market and host an open house. Alex, a successful painter, grudgingly agrees to tidy up his studio, while Ruth gets busy brewing cinnamon sticks to make the house smell "homey."

Soon they're overrun with visitors inspecting the property. Some are serious, like a lesbian couple (Maddie Corman and Miriam Shor) with a hyperactive seeing-eye dog in training. But some just want to exploit the chance to invade other people's homes, like one woman (Ilana Levine) who insists on lying on the bed to try it out, while her pre-adolescent daughter (Sterling Jerins) makes herself at home in Alex's studio.

Others can't stop turning on the TV to see the news report about a truck driver who abandoned his rig on the Williamsburg Bridge, snarling traffic for miles. A hysterical manhunt has been mounted to find him because his Uzbek origins have led some to suspect, on absolutely no evidence, that he's a terrorist. With ice-cold calculation, Lily reassures Alex and Ruth that while the traffic jam is bad for their open house day, the terrorism issue is not necessarily a problem since she knows a realtor who sold a Tribeca loft the day after 9/11.

It's the spicy little splashes of black humor like this that give the film a bit of needed tang, as do the smartly observed ancillary characters, colorful types who just avoid caricature status, like Jackie Hoffman's seen-it-all gawker, amusingly named "The 'Eh' Lady" in the credits. More problematic are the stretches where the script feels a need to score high-minded points against, for instance, the morally bankrupt but cash-rich people who work in the financial sector (a soft target these days) or common bigots.

The film's biggest departure from the source novel is to make Ruth and Alex a biracial couple (they're elderly Jews in the original). In the first part of the film, no one even blinks at their mixed marriage, which is rather delightful and in keeping with contemporary mores. But then the flashbacks kick in, and younger versions of Alex and Ruth (played by Korey Jackson and Claire van der Boom) are handed noble speeches about how their marriage would be illegal in 30 states. Presumably, the filmmakers want to underscore how much views about intermarriage have evolved, just the way gentrification has reshaped neighborhoods and property values, but it feels tacked on and preachy.

It also distracts from the impressive way Jackson and especially van der Boom channel the mannerisms of Freeman and Keaton without resorting to outright mimicry. Both couples have a smooth, palpable chemistry, one that feels enriched with the tannins of long-maintained love in the case of the older couple. At one point, Freeman's Alex hums a song as he gets ready for bed and Keaton's Ruth takes up the tune as she reads, an absolutely lovely moment that says everything about the contented harmony of their relationship.

Moments like that bring to mind similarly thoughtful bits of business that can be found in Loncraine's best films, such as his justly praised Shakespeare adaptation *Richard III* or his underrated comedies *My One and Only* and *Wimbledon*. His direction here is understated but generous, not just toward the affable, endearing leads but with the supporting players and the city itself, in every way a character in its own right.

Sales *Myriad Pictures*
Cast *Morgan Freeman, Diane Keaton, Cynthia Nixon, Korey Jackson, Claire van der Boom*
Director *Richard Loncraine*
91 minutes

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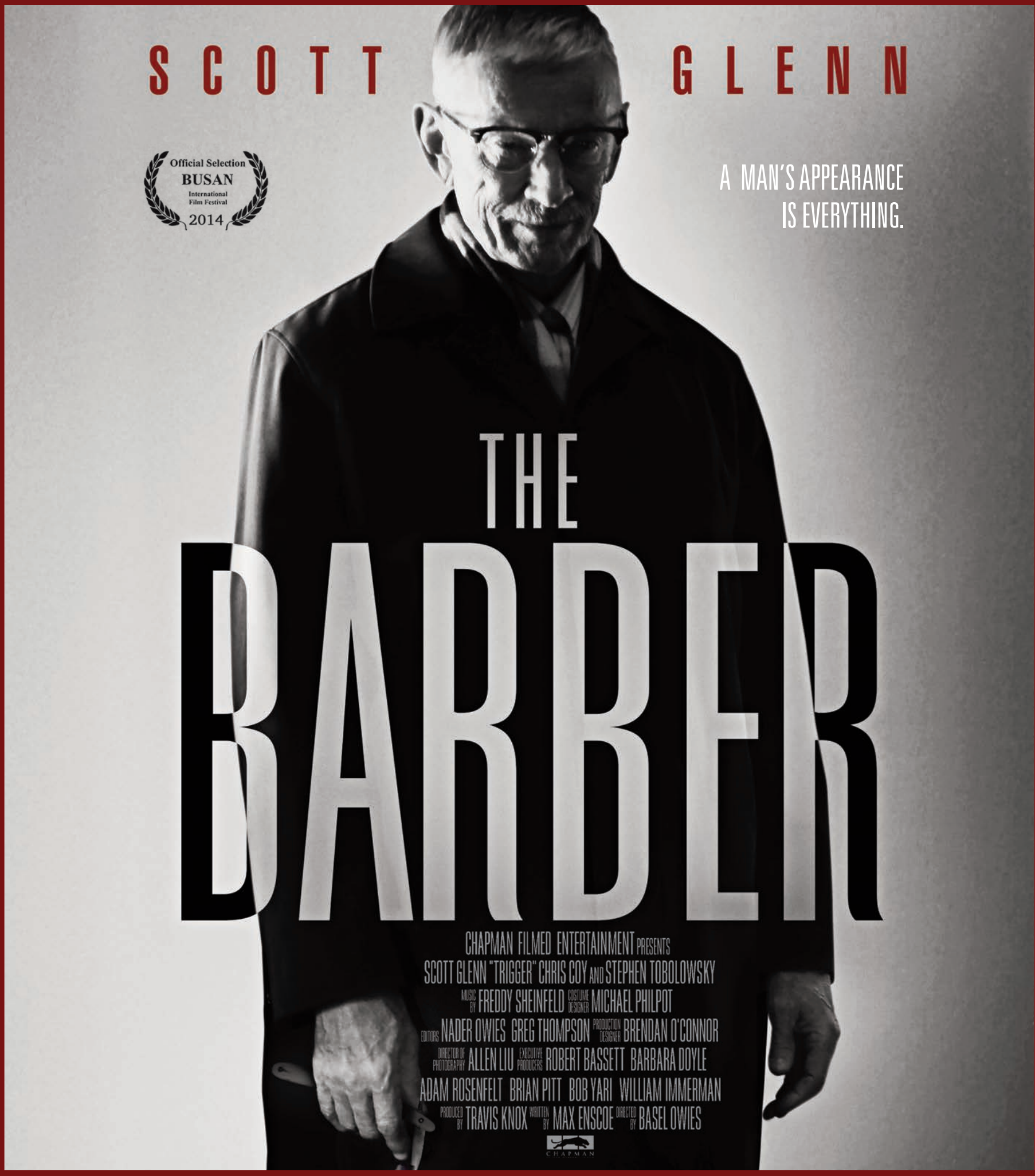
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SCREENING

AMERICAN BEACH HOUSE

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November 10, 2014 • 3:00pm

Samba

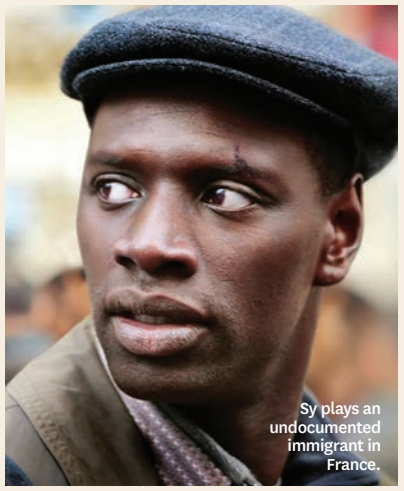
The makers of *Intouchables* deliver another crowd-pleasing social dramedy, though this one wears out its welcome without bringing its message home BY JORDAN MINTZER

THE STAR AND CREW MAY BE the same and the subject matter equally worthy, but lightning does not exactly strike twice in *Samba*, Olivier Nakache's and Eric Toledano's follow-up to their 2011 smash hit *Intouchables*, which grossed a whopping $425 million worldwide and remains one of the most successful French films in history.

Once again teaming up with Omar Sy, who winningly portrays an illegal alien trying to stay in France at all costs, this social dramedy-cum-romantic comedy starts off promisingly before losing its rhythm midway through. And although there are amusing set pieces that cleverly underline the strife of Paris' immigrant community, the chemistry between Sy and co-star Charlotte Gainsbourg, who plays his neurotic love interest, is never quite there, while the film's message is lost amid too many plot contrivances.

Part of what made *Intouchables* such a hit was the prickly relationship at its core, with Francois Cluzet starring opposite Sy as a paraplegic in need of a helping hand — not to mention a few good laughs. Such a bond is more or less absent from *Samba*, which substitutes the Cluzet character for a depressive Parisian, Alice (Gainsbourg), who falls in love with Samba (Sy) when they first meet at a detainment center inside Charles de Gaulle Airport. But despite a twisting narrative that will eventually bring the two together, their pairing doesn't click the way it should, and Alice never feels like a full-fledged character.

Such flaws are only truly felt after the halfway point, when the love story begins to take center stage over all the comedy-charged realism. Until then, Nakache and Toledano (who adapted their script from Delphine Coulin's novel) deliver an impressively lucid, and often hilarious, indictment of France's two-tiered social system, where illegals work low-wage jobs as they remain on the run from the authorities while those with papers lead a more privileged existence.


Sy plays an undocumented immigrant in France.

The precision of the movie's early reels soon gives way to lots of fluff, whether it's the various she-loves-me/he-loves-me-not tribulations of the romance, the friendship Samba develops with a fellow alien (Tahar Rahim) that provides only a few broad laughs or the subplot involving another African refugee that feels like a pure screenwriting device. Even the rhythm seems off in these latter sections, the scenes running on for too long and the filmmakers relying on a busy soundtrack of hits, backed by Ludovico Einaudi's busy and gushy score, to channel every emotion and underline every development onscreen.

Luckily, the talented Sy is there to carry much of the story's weight, toning down his usual shenanigans (which he picked up as a TV sketch comic) while feigning a decent Senegalese accent and making Samba someone you want to root for despite a rather muddled set of intentions. The same can't necessarily be said for Alice, who Gainsbourg tries her best to render relatable but who's an underwritten and often humorless shell of a character, even if the team tacks on one good joke for her at the very end.

Sales *Gaumont*
Cast *Omar Sy, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Tahar Rahim, Izia Higelin*
Directors *Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano // 120 minutes*

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Stephen King's A Good Marriage

A woman discovers that her husband is a serial killer in this so-so thriller adapted by the author from his own novella

BY FRANK SCHECK

THE LATEST IN HIS ever-growing canon of screen and television adaptations, *Stephen King's A Good Marriage* is a decidedly minor entry that is mainly notable for representing the writer's first big-screen adaptation of his own material — in this case a novella from his 2010 collection, *Full Dark, No Stars* — since 1989's *Pet Sematary*.

But despite the author's scripting and the fine central performances by Joan Allen and Anthony LaPaglia, this low-key effort directed by Peter Askin fails to fulfill the potential of its provocative premise.

Having received a limited theatrical release, the film should find its largest audiences on home video formats.

The good marriage of the title is the one between upscale couple Bob and Darcy Anderson, who at the film's beginning are happily celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary, complete with some (very demurely filmed) middle-aged nookie at the evening's end. The lovable Bob, whose eccentricities include an obsession with collecting rare pennies — he's only interested in finding them in change, not buying them — leaves shortly thereafter on a business trip, with Darcy left by herself at home.

Spooked by news accounts of the 12 rapes and murders of young women committed by a serial killer known as "Beadie," Darcy quickly shuts off the television after spying a similar scene in a slasher film.

But the horror soon lands at home when, looking for batteries in her garage, she comes across incriminating evidence indicating that her mild-mannered husband is in reality a homicidal monster.

Reacting with the expected mixture of disbelief and horror, Darcy doesn't know where to turn, especially when Bob comes home and immediately discovers that his ruse has been uncovered. Reacting not with anger but rather gentle reassurance — "I would never let Beadie hurt you," he says about his alter-ego — he argues convincingly that no good will come out of her going to the police and promises that if she stays silent, he'll stop his murderous extracurricular activities forever. Darcy reluctantly agrees.

The resulting domestic tension is rife with darkly comedic and dramatic possibilities that were better exploited on the printed page, where King was able to more fully delineate his heroine's tortured thought process.

Here the scenario plays out in explicably bland fashion; director Askin fails to invest the material with sufficient cinematic style or nuance, with the resolution of Darcy's moral dilemma proving particularly anticlimactic.

Especially irksome are the frustratingly fleeting appearances of a mysterious figure (Stephen Lang) whose relationship to the story is made clear only toward the movie's end.

Allen does as well as she possibly can conveying her character's complex and conflicting emotions, and LaPaglia's deeply twisted husband is all the more chilling for his genial bonhomie. But for all these veteran performers' commendable efforts, *Stephen King's A Good Marriage* ultimately feels like little more than a slightly above average episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.

Sales *Screen Media*
Cast *Joan Allen, Anthony LaPaglia, Stephen Lang, Cara Buono, Kristen Connolly*
Director *Peter Askin // 102 minutes*

LaPaglia and Allen as a couple in happier times.

A new distribution company in CEE

Freeman Distribution has announced the start-up operations in Central and Eastern Europe as an all rights distributor for the territories of Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ex-Yugoslavia, including Albania and Bulgaria.

Freeman Distribution is represented by Anca Truta, a long time distribution veteran in Eastern Europe. Anca Truta has assembled top teams in both Romania and Hungary, where the company will have its own theatrical distribution outlets, both operating under the name of Freeman Entertainment.

Freeman Distribution will acquire and distribute content across all media in the territories mentioned above and benefits from strategic partnerships with key distributors in the region such as Monolith Films in Poland and Blitz Film and Video Distribution in Ex- Yugoslavia, including Albania.

In Romania, Freeman has secured the **Warner Bros**. theatrical license starting with the 1st of September 2014. The company has also been able to secure content on exclusive basis from producers such as: **Summit/Lionsgate**, **Mr. Smith/ DreamWorks (Live Action)** in addition to working closely with **Europa Corp** (Taken 3), **QED** (Fury and Driving Grandpa), **Red Granite** (Dumb and Dumber To), **Bloom** (Nice Guys), **Film Nation** (Magic in the Moonlight), **Annapurna** (American Express), **Good Universe** (My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2) among others.

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The Hollywood REPORTER

Source: comScore September 2014

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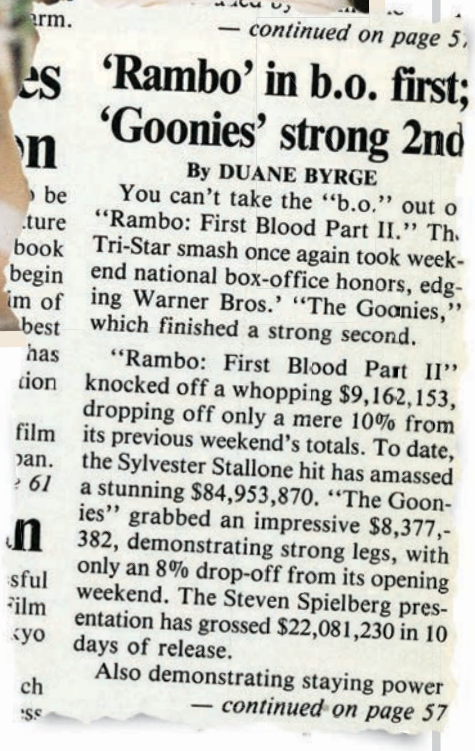
The secret to surviving AFM, says Astin (pictured with Lori Petty at an AFM party in 1999), is "hydration, hand sanitizer and the app for Rosetta Stone."



— continued on page 5

'Rambo' in b.o. first; 'Goonies' strong 2nd

By DUANE BYRGE

You can't take the "b.o." out o "Rambo: First Blood Part II." Th Tri-Star smash once again took week-end national box-office honors, edg-ing Warner Bros.' "The Goonies," which finished a strong second.

"Rambo: First Blood Part II" knocked off a whopping $9,162,153, dropping off only a mere 10% from its previous weekend's totals. To date, the Sylvester Stallone hit has amassed a stunning $84,953,870. "The Goon-ies" grabbed an impressive $8,377,-382, demonstrating strong legs, with only an 8% drop-off from its opening weekend. The Steven Spielberg pres-entation has grossed $22,081,230 in 10 days of release.

Also demonstrating staying power

— continued on page 57

Sean Astin Went From Goonie to Hobbit

BY THE TIME SEAN Astin took his first trip to the American Film Market in 1990 at age 19, he'd already been acting for nearly a decade. He'd gotten his start in the 1981 ABC Afterschool Special *Please Don't Hit Me, Mom*, in which he played an abused child opposite his real-life mother, Patty Duke. But it was the role of Mikey in 1985's *The Goonies* that put him on the map. The film's success makes you "stop and think," Astin, now 43, tells *THR*. "I don't know if anyone could have anticipated that 30 years later, people would still be screening the movie all over the country."

While Astin starred in other memorable films post-*Goonies*, including 1993's *Rudy*, the Steven Spielberg-produced film remained his biggest box-office hit, at $61 million domestically, until Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* films. The trilogy, in which Astin played hobbit Samwise Gamgee, went on to gross nearly $3 billion worldwide. "Most of the people I know think they're pretty good movies," says Astin. "People want to work with actors who have been a part of something special to them, so for the rest of my life I'll be able to work with filmmakers because they'll study *Lord of the Rings*."

Astin is back at AFM this year with *The Surface*, an independent film that deals with suicide and depression, "issues no people can avoid," he says. Of his experiences at the market, says the actor, now a married father of three: "There's something about standing behind a curtain in a room like the Wizard of Oz, listening to different reps from different territories haggle over the price — like it's some sort of new liquid tonic they're going to bring for their people." Astin also hopes to return to AFM in a few years to sell his first feature: an adaptation of Lois Lowry's best-selling children's book *Number the Stars*. "It will be a huge international title," says Astin, "and I'm sure that everyone at AFM will be clamoring for it — at least that's the dream I tell myself at night."

— PEANUT ALVAREZ-MENA

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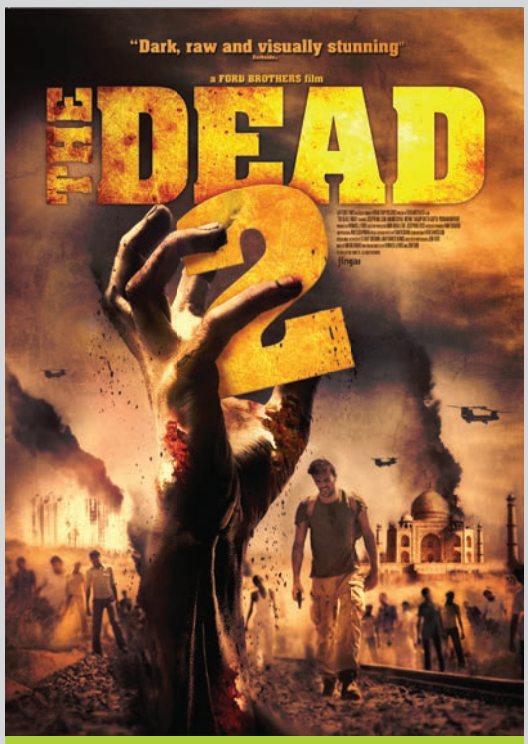

SCREENING SUNDAY
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